6.1 Overview

6.1.1 LINKS WITH OUR TIMES

The resettlement of refugees and displaced persons is one of the most pressing problems facing the world today. Forced migration from Syria, Afghanistan and other war-torn countries has created a dire situation for the immigrants themselves and a dilemma for the countries in which they seek asylum.

Over its history, Australia has been faced with a similar dilemma: to offer a home to refugees or to ‘secure its borders’ against them. The image opposite of asylum seekers from Iran and Iraq who illegally attempted to enter Australian territory is particularly tragic: the overcrowded vessel, which had lost its engine, was wrecked and dozens of refugees perished.

Forced migration, however, is only one aspect of the history of migration that Australia has experienced. Not all immigrants to these shores have been seeking asylum — indeed, the vast majority of immigrants to Australia since World War II have been invited, and their industry and presence have enriched Australia both economically and culturally.

BIG QUESTIONS

As you work through this topic, look for information that will help you to answer these questions:

1. How have Australian immigration policies changed since 1945?
2. How have these changes in policy reflected Australia’s needs?
3. How has the experience of migration changed over time, for both immigrants and Australian residents?
4. Identify the challenges faced by new immigrants compared to established Australian residents.
5. In what ways have domestic and international issues caused controversy in relation to immigration policy?

STARTER QUESTIONS

1. What proportion of your class has an immigrant heritage?
2. What advantages does an immigrant heritage offer?
3. Identify and list the main factors that would encourage someone to migrate.
4. Think about your (nearest) city. Are particular parts of the city populated by particular ethnic groups? If so, what makes these areas distinctive?
6.2 Examine the evidence

6.2.1 How do we know about migration experiences?

Immigration has been a constant of Australia’s history, particularly since Europeans arrived in 1788. There are rich sources of information about Australia’s immigration history in museums and libraries, including photographs, individual migrant experiences captured in stories, interviews and artistic works, as well as statistical data.

**Statistical data**

One way to view history is through the lens of a statistician, whose job it is to look at trends in the facts and figures that explain how society changes over time. In order to make judgements based on this data, it is essential to make sure that it is reliable by getting it from an official source.

Throughout the twentieth century the Australian Bureau of Statistics collected data on migration to, from and within Australia. This data shows clear trends, including rises and falls in the numbers of immigrants, and changes in the country of origin of immigrants and the types of work immigrants do once they have made Australia their home.

**SOURCE 1** This graph shows the proportion of Australia’s population born overseas in the years 1894–2014. From a low of 10 per cent in 1947, the percentage of people born overseas has steadily increased, reaching 28 per cent in June 2015, the highest point in 120 years.

**SOURCE 2** This graph shows the top 10 countries of origin for Australians born overseas. As of 2014, the highest number of overseas-born residents were from the United Kingdom. They were followed by residents from New Zealand, China, India and the Philippines.

![Graph showing top 10 countries of origin for Australians born overseas.]

**Migrants’ stories**

As migration to Australia increased following World War II, social workers and policy-makers became increasingly interested in hearing migrants’ stories. Some of these stories were collected in official documents and underpinned the government’s decisions on how to promote better housing, working conditions, health and education among migrants. Today, the migrant experience is depicted in exhibitions held at locations around the country, including the National Maritime Museum (Sydney), and the Immigration Museum (Melbourne). The Albury Library Museum contains a permanent exhibition space, ‘The Bonegilla Story’, which focuses on the experiences of migrants who passed through the Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre. Migrants’ stories have also formed the basis for recent autobiographies, including *The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do and *Growing Up Asian in Australia* by Alice Pung. These stories provide primary source evidence of the migrant experience and add ‘flesh’ to the bare bones of statistical data.
I was born in Kabul, Afghanistan during the Soviet War in 1984. I, like every other human being living on this earth, didn’t exercise any choice in where, or the circumstances in which I would be born.  
Due to the Soviet war my family had to flee Afghanistan in 1988. Our journey took us from Kabul to India, to the Czech Republic, followed by Germany and then finally we were granted asylum in Australia in 1991 under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian program.

I was enrolled in school both in India and Germany, each time making new friends and learning a completely new language. Upon arrival in Australia I was immediately enrolled into English as Second Language (ESL) classes.

Now when I reflect on my humble beginnings, it is still unbelievable to think that I arrived in Australia as a shy 7 year old who couldn’t speak a word of English. I will be forever grateful to Australia for the educational opportunities I have been given and for allowing my family and I, to call Australia our ‘home’.

I am often saddened though by the conduct of some of our politicians and media personalities who seem to be peddling peoples’ prejudices rather than challenging them. Multiculturalism is here to stay and not just in the form of Chinese dumplings and Turkish kebabs so let’s all work towards ensuring that the Australia that we all call home, doesn’t just seek to tolerate diversity, but rather, celebrates it.

Photographs
Another useful source that can assist in revealing the experience of migrants is photographs. The benefits of photographs are twofold. Firstly, they can provide an obvious snapshot of the living or social conditions experienced by migrants. They may reveal facts about affluence, age and gender distribution amongst other things. SOURCE 4 depicts Yugoslav, Polish and Latvian displaced persons at Bonegilla, a migrant centre established in 1947. In the costume of their homelands, they contrast with the corrugated iron structures behind them. Closed in 1971, the centre now is the site of a migration museum.

The second benefit of using photographs as sources is that they can balance, augment or even counter other sources of evidence. Often migrants’ stories are laden with a moral or lesson. Generally, they are success stories and the author of the story wants to impress the listener with their tale of hardships overcome. Oral history, as this is known, is a complete history as far as the author is concerned, but historians are wary of this and photographs can complement or challenge the version provided.

6.2 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1 Using SOURCE 1 identify the decade which saw the greatest growth in the number of Australians born overseas. 
2 Why do you think the author of SOURCE 3 begins her story with the statement that she didn’t ‘exercise any choice in where, or the circumstances in which I would be born’?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

3 Identify what trends a statistician might draw from SOURCES 1 and 2. 
4 In what ways could SOURCE 4 be used to paint (a) a positive picture or (b) a negative picture of the migration experience?

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

5 SOURCE 1 one could be used to argue that immigration is increasing in Australia but it is only a graph about the percentage of overseas-born Australians. What other reasons could be given to explain the increase detected? 
6 The figures on the horizontal axis of SOURCE 2 are very low. They represent the percentage of Australians who were born in these countries. Could these figures challenge any of the stereotypes about immigration in Australia? Explain your response.
6.3 Waves of migration

6.3.1 Australia after World War II

At the end of World War II, Australia’s 7 million people came from a predominantly Anglo-Celtic background and the majority of people — including politicians — wanted to keep it that way. However, the world was changing. In the decades that followed, Australia would be forced to open its borders to waves of immigrants, first from Europe, then from Asia. The different beliefs and attitudes that these immigrants brought with them would both cause conflict and enrich Australian culture.

Facing a significant employment shortage at the end of World War II, Australia needed to supplement its predominantly Anglo-Celtic population of only seven million people. Initially, northern and southern Europeans displaced or destitute because of the war filled the breach. The first ‘wave’ of post-war immigrants were able to enrich Australia economically by meeting the employment opportunities that were available and culturally by enhancing the diversity of the Australian population. The transition to Australian life, however, was not always smooth and for many immigrants, Australia was not a welcoming place. Australian politicians, torn between a need to economically diversify and to placate existing Australian attitudes, manipulated the immigration situation to suit their agenda. This has tended to be a mainstay of political involvement in immigration policy. In the decades that followed the end of World War II and up to the present, Australia has moved from seeking immigration to managing immigration and then to confronting those claiming to be the victims of forced immigration.

Australia emerged from World War II as a small, insular and mostly white population, living mainly at the coastal edges of a vast landmass. Fearing that such a small population would be vulnerable to attack from overseas, Arthur Calwell, the immigration minister at the time, attempted to recruit immigrants from overseas. Once here, these immigrants were put to work as part of the post-war reconstruction effort. During this period, a high level of economic growth, combined with a low level of unemployment, led to the post-war boom. Despite the range of benefits that a larger population offered the country, the immigration minister’s welcome initially extended only to those of white European descent.

6.3.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. For what reason did Australia need to encourage immigration after World War II?
2. How did Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell attempt to appease Australians who were fearful of immigration?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3. Look at SOURCE 1. What does the existence of such a window display in London reveal about Australia’s immigration policy and needs in the period after World War II?
4. In what ways would this image and caption alleviate the concerns of Australians who were not in favour of immigration?
6.3.2 Economic boom and assimilation

A change of government in 1949 also led to a slight change of immigration policy. The Menzies government and its immigration minister, Harold Holt, relaxed the conditions facing some non-European immigrants and also permitted Japanese war brides (wartime marriages between soldiers and foreigners) to be admitted. Yet the focus was still on European migration and between 1945 and 1965, some two million European migrants came to Australia as assisted migrants. Assisted migrants had most of their fare paid for them and in return they had to work for at least two years in jobs often chosen by the Australian government for them. Economically, this was a great success and immigration to Australia facilitated the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s. Socially, however, immigrants were encouraged to become 'New Australians' and to accept assimilation where their own culture was surrendered in favour of the Australian way of life, with mixed results.

SOURCE 2 Migration poster from the 1950s distributed in the United Kingdom advertising immigration to Australia for £10

assimilation the process in which individuals or groups of differing origins take on the basic attitudes, habits and lifestyles of another culture

To access videos, interactivities, discussion widgets, image galleries, weblinks and more, go to www.jacplus.com.au
6.3.2 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. From the information provided so far in this subtopic, how would you describe the overall character of Australia’s immigration policy in the period 1945–66?
2. What conditions were placed on assisted migrants when they chose to immigrate to Australia?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
3. Look at **SOURCE 2**. What details does it provide about the types of employment and living conditions that will greet prospective immigrants when they arrive in Australia?
4. Compile a list of 5–10 things that you think immigrants would like to know about living in Australia that are not on this poster.

6.3.3 From integration to multiculturalism and beyond

In the mid-1960s Australia was at a crucial policy and international junction. It had just entered the Vietnam conflict. The **White Australia Policy**, a relic from the nineteenth century, had still not been completely abolished. There was a growing recognition that assimilation was not a policy suitable for any nation, let alone a nation of immigrants.

The first stage of change was brief but important. Hubert Opperman, Minister for Immigration in the Holt Liberal government, announced in 1966 that immigrants would be considered on their suitability as settlers, their ability to integrate and whether they had qualifications useful to Australia. This opened the door for non-European immigration under the title of **integration**. This was a positive step that marked the beginning of the official end of the White Australia Policy.

Many Australians, however, saw integration as too conservative. Under changes introduced by the new Whitlam Labor Government in 1972, the settlement policy that Australia favoured was labelled **multiculturalism**. The end of the Vietnam conflict and the new policy of multiculturalism saw a period of increased Asian immigration. Al Grassby, the immigration minister in the Whitlam Government, stated in 1973 that ‘ethnic pluralism is the most desirable policy for Australia as it moves towards the year 2000, and the most realistic given the experiences of immigration in the past’. Multiculturalism has been embraced by successive governments since that time. In 1999, the Howard Liberal Coalition government approved the National Harmony Day celebration. On 21 March every year, Australians recognise our multicultural heritage by celebrating Harmony Day.

**SOURCE 3** This poster advertising Harmony Day carries the message ‘everyone belongs’. Harmony Day celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity and promotes inclusiveness.

---

**White Australia Policy** an Australian government policy that restricted immigration to Australia to white migrants

**integration** policy requiring immigrants to publicly adopt the new country’s culture while still being able to celebrate their own culture privately

**multiculturalism** policy recognising an immigrant’s right to practise whichever culture they wish so long as they do not break the law
Skilled migrants, refugees and illegal arrivals

Australia’s official immigration policies since the 1970s have been largely administered with two main concerns in mind. The first concern is to admit migrants who fill a gap in our employment market; that is, skilled migrants who can perform jobs that are needed. The second concern is to establish closer relationships in our geographic region. This latter concern has meant that immigrants from Asian countries are beginning to make up the largest group of immigrants to Australia.

Alongside government policy, the last few decades have seen international turmoil on an unprecedented scale. This has seen a vast exodus of people from their home countries to anywhere they can flee. Australia was faced with a number of Indo-Chinese refugees in the period after the Vietnam conflict and continues to encounter refugees from this region, as well as Middle Eastern countries like Syria and Afghanistan. While many people trying to enter Australia are refugees, others are illegally attempting to enter Australia under the guise of refugee status. Like many governments around the world, the Australian government includes accepting legitimate refugees as part of their immigration policy, but like many other countries is struggling to deal with determining who deserves refugee status. Successive Australian governments have struggled to deal with this dilemma and have set up a number of approaches to deal with the situation. These approaches are examined later in this topic.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In 2016, Syria was the source of the largest number of refugees worldwide, with more than 4 million people forced to flee the war in their homeland. Of those, at least 1.6 million are children. Syrian refugees live in Lebanon (1.5 million), Pakistan (1.5 million), Iran (900 000) and Jordan (800 000). Almost one out of every four refugees worldwide is Syrian. Syria also has the largest number of internally displaced people, at 7.6 million. Recently Australia pledged to take 12 000 Syrian refugees as part of its humanitarian intake.

**6.3.3 Activities**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. For what reasons was the policy of assimilation criticised in the period after 1966?
2. Identify the critical differences in the immigration policies of the late 1960s and early 1970s compared to earlier immigration policies.
3. Identify the two main factors that have driven immigration policy since the 1970s.
4. What mitigating factors have influenced immigration policy in the last two decades?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

5. Look at SOURCE 3. Who sponsors the concept of Harmony Day? What does this tell you about that sponsor?
6. How have the creators of the poster tried to communicate the idea of harmony in SOURCE 3?

**6.3 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

**IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

1. Identify the events and factors that have driven Australia’s immigration policy since 1945. Make a table under the following column headings:
   - Years
   - Name or description of immigration policy
   - Events/factors that influenced the formation of the policy
   - Impact of the policy.
2. Go to www.dss.gov.au to explore Australia’s current immigration policy. Describe the nature of that policy and compare it to previous policies.

**DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

4. The phrase ‘waves of migration’ has been used by Australian curriculum writers to describe the different stages of migration that have occurred in Australia.
   a) Could you argue that ‘waves’ is a negative term?
   b) Identify other terms that could be used to describe the stages of migration that Australia has experienced since 1945.
6.4 Changing immigration policy

6.4.1 The White Australia policy

Government policy has always been the major factor in determining who was allowed to settle in Australia. In the first half of the twentieth century, the White Australia policy — a discriminatory set of laws designed to keep non-whites out of Australia — was in full force and enjoyed widespread support.

**SOURCE 1** The first section of the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901

---

**IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION.**

No. 17 of 1901.

An Act to place certain restrictions on Immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited Immigrants.

[Assented to 23rd December, 1901.]

BE it enacted by the King’s Most Excellent Majesty the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the *Immigration Restriction Act* 1901.

2. In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears,—

   “Officer” means any officer appointed under this Act, or any Officer of Customs;

   “The Minister” means the Minister for External Affairs.

3. The immigration into the Commonwealth of the persons described in any of the following paragraphs of this section (hereinafter called “prohibited immigrants”) is prohibited, namely:

   (a) Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in an European language directed by the officer;

   (b) any person likely in the opinion of the Minister or of an officer to become a charge upon the public or upon any public or charitable institution;

   (c) any idiot or insane person;

   (d) any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease of a loathsome or dangerous character;

   (e) any person who has within three years been convicted of an offence, not being a mere political offence, and has been sentenced to imprisonment for one year or longer thereafter, and has not received a pardon;

   (f) any prostitute or person living on the prostitution of others;

   (g) any persons under a contract or agreement to perform manual labour within the Commonwealth: Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to workmen exempted by the Minister for special skill required in Australia or to persons under contract or agreement to serve as part of the crew of a vessel engaged in the coasting trade in Australian waters if the rates of wages specified therein are not lower than the rates ruling in the Commonwealth.
In the mid nineteenth century, immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands had been expelled from Australia in response to white Australians’ fear that industrious immigrants would take their jobs by accepting a lower standard of living and working for less money. These actions were reinforced by the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, which gave immigration officers greater discretion when deciding whether or not to allow a person entry into the country. One means by which this was done was the dictation test. The dictation test was designed to test that a potential immigrant was literate. The examiner could ensure that the candidate would fail by testing the immigrant in a language with which he or she was unfamiliar.

**Source 2** In the White Australia Game (1914), players are encouraged to ‘get the coloured men out and the white men in’.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
The dictation test was removed from the Immigration Restriction Act in 1958. In the six decades since its introduction, it was used barely 2000 times.

### 6.4.1 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. For what reasons was the White Australia Policy adopted in the nineteenth century in Australia?
2. Why did immigration officials use a dictation test to vet potential immigrants?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
3. Look at **Source 1**. What phrases or terms do you find confronting? Explain your response.
4. How could section 3a of the Act be manipulated to thwart potential immigrants into Australia?
5. Who was the White Australia Game designed for? How can you tell? What statement does it make regarding Australia’s immigration policy in the early to mid-twentieth century?
6. In pairs, discuss the topic, ‘The White Australia Game is just a bit of fun. It couldn’t hurt anyone.’
6.4.2 Populate or perish

Immediately after World War II, there was much to be done. Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley wanted to expand Australia’s industrial capacity, and needed workers with specialist skills to complete major construction works, such as the ambitious Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme, and usher Australia into a new age. More workers would also mean that the country could become more competitive as an exporter, offering primary goods, manufactured goods and elaborately transformed manufactured goods within the global market. This would be particularly important as Australia shifted its focus away from its traditional trade partners of the United Kingdom and Europe towards the Asia–Pacific.

Even though the war was over, there was a strong fear of the rise of communism in Asia, and many people were concerned that Australia’s population of 7 million was not large enough to resist this threat. These people believed that the way to protect Australia from invasion was to increase the population, a view that had originally been raised by former Prime Minister Billy Hughes in the mid 1930s. Hughes’s slogan was ‘populate or perish’. One of the greatest supporters of this view was Arthur Calwell, who became the first minister of immigration in 1945.

**SOURCE 3** This poster, designed in 1948, was hung in many migration camps throughout Europe.

**communism** a system of government in which the state controls the economy, in an attempt to ensure that all goods are equally shared by the people.
As immigration minister, it was Arthur Calwell’s job to sell a message of hope to potential migrants in Europe. In 1945, he announced to Parliament that he would ‘embark on an adequate publicity campaign in Britain and in other centres of potential immigration on the European continent’. Calwell ran a publicity campaign using publications, newsreels and radio to paint a picture of Australia’s natural beauty and economic wealth to potential migrants abroad. Despite seeking to increase migration to Australia immediately following the war, the government was still reluctant to open the borders to people who were not of Anglo-Celtic or European descent. They claimed that it would be more difficult for non-white immigrants to adapt to the Australian way of life and they would be less easily accepted by the Australian people. To support this argument, they pointed to the examples of the United States, South Africa and England, where racial tension, as well as poverty and prejudice, were causing escalating conflict.

**SOURCE 4** This extract from one of Calwell’s speeches reflects the concerns of many people at the time about Australia’s low population.

> 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 seven million by an increased birth rate and by a policy of planned immigration with the limits of our existing legislation. Immigration is, at best, only the counterpart of the most important phase of population building, natural increase.

### 6.4.2 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. What advantages did Ben Chifley see in increasing Australia’s workforce?
2. How did the Chifley government justify their selective immigration policy which favoured white Europeans?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

3. What impression do you think **SOURCE 3** was designed to give Europeans of life in Australia? What makes you say this? Refer to colour, characters and setting in your answer.
4. In **SOURCE 4**, Arthur Calwell gave two reasons to explain why Australia needed a larger population after World War II. What were they?
5. What do the arguments made by Calwell suggest about the Australian public at this time?

### 6.4.3 Australia’s response to ‘populate or perish’

Public opinion was divided when it came to the merits of the ‘populate or perish’ strategy. Most people agreed that Australia needed a larger population in order to protect itself in case of war. However, there was strong anti-migrant sentiment within much of the community. Some feared that a large migrant intake would put Australian jobs at risk. Others worried that migrants would not be able to accept the Australian way of life and would distort or spoil Australian cultural values. Despite these concerns, immigration was set to rise, but it would be done in such a way that — at least for a while — Australia’s population could increase at unprecedented levels while accepting only those people deemed most acceptable.

**SOURCE 5** In this article from the Cairns Post (14 August 1950), the author expresses his support for the government’s proposed immigration program.

> Our vast, abundantly rich, but empty and undeveloped spaces, constitute an alluring temptation and a standing invitation to our nearby numerous, land hungry and needy neighbours and a correspondingly grave menace to our national existence . . . Sufficient population and effective development are the only effective means by which we can make a worthy contribution to the needs of mankind, establish our legal and moral right to the permanent control of Australia, and provide the necessary deterrent to any would-be aggressors. ‘Populate or perish,’ therefore, is a stark reality grimly and urgently staring at us.
Refugees

Some of the first people to benefit from Australia’s loosening of its immigration laws were European refugees. When the war ended, more than 20 million Europeans had been displaced. Many could not return home for fear of persecution due to race, religion, membership of a social group or political belief. In the late 1940s, the Australian government accepted many Baltic refugees from Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. After signing the United Nations’ Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951, Australia accepted many more migrants on humanitarian grounds, resettling 170,000 refugees by 1954. Between 1956 and 1968, refugees from Hungary and Czechoslovakia were resettled in Australia as they fled from communism. This meant a large supply of immigrants as Australia sought to repopulate.

SOURCE 6 Many residents in Europe’s displaced persons camps dreamed of making a better life for themselves in a far-off place.

To access videos, interactivities, discussion widgets, image galleries, weblinks and more, go to www.jacplus.com.au
6.5 New Australians

6.5.1 Assisted migration
In the post-war period the government aimed to increase the population by attracting 70,000 migrants per year. They launched an assisted migration scheme to attract the most desirable migrants. Under this scheme, subjects of Great Britain, including England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and British territories such as Malta and Cyprus, were given the chance to travel to Australia on a cheap one-way ticket, while their children travelled free. Because they paid just £10 for their ticket, these migrants were known as ‘ten pound Poms’ (see 6.3.2 SOURCE 2).

Those who chose to make the journey to Australia faced an ocean voyage that would take around one month. For some this meant travelling in a ship such as the Fairsea, which had been converted from a troop carrier. It was an uncomfortable journey, with cramped bunk spaces and a constant ‘reek’ of disinfectant. For others, on purpose-built passenger ships like the Orcades, the voyage was much more comfortable, with a range of cabin choices, on-board shops, a swimming pool and even a hair salon.

**SOURCE 1** While some immigrants made the journey to Australia on comfortable passenger ships designed for the purpose, many faced more austere and cramped conditions as shown below in this model of a typical cabin.
6.5.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. What was the assisted migration scheme?
2. Which migrants did the Australian government consider the most desirable?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3. What does the model of a typical cabin in SOURCE 1 suggest about the journey from the United Kingdom to Australia?
4. How does the image differ to the information provided in the text about assisted migrants who travelled on the Orcades?

6.5.2 Migrant reception centres

When Australia began accepting large numbers of immigrants after the war, the lack of housing meant that immigrants had to be provided temporary accommodation. Unless they could stay with family who were already in Australia, they would be taken to a transit camp, holding centre, workers’ hostel, or reception and training centre, where they would be housed for around six weeks.

The longest running post-war migrant reception centre was at Bonegilla in northern Victoria. Established by the Department of Immigration in 1947 in a former military barracks, Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre had its own hospital, three churches, a primary school and the capacity to house more than 7000 people at any one time. Between 1947 and 1951 around half of the 170 000 displaced persons who migrated to Australia came through the centre. After 1951 Bonegilla received a large proportion of assisted migrants.

On arriving at Bonegilla, men were sent to the men’s barracks, and women and children to the women’s barracks. These were simple huts that were scorching in summer and freezing in winter. Showers and meals were communal, and the residents had to use pit toilets. Each resident was given their own blankets, cutlery and crockery. Soon after arrival, their English skills were tested and they were enrolled in a language class. To find work, they undertook a job interview. In the morning residents were woken by the sound of a bugle; during the day they attended English-language classes and lessons on Australian culture, and a ‘lights-out’ policy was enforced each night. Immigrants who were not British citizens had to apply for an alien registration certificate. Their ‘alien’ status limited their political rights and access to social security, and permitted them to apply for specific jobs only. Immigrants remained ‘aliens’ until they gained Australian citizenship.

The centre’s functional but basic living conditions, and longer-than-expected waits for employment, led to a feeling of disenchantment among some of the residents. After three migrants committed suicide at the facility in 1952, a riot broke out. This was the first of two riots at the centre, the second of which broke out in 1961.
6.5.2 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. What was the purpose of migrant reception centres like Bonegilla?
2. Using the text provided, draw a timeline of the history of Bonegilla, outlining the major events that took place there during the period 1947–62.

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
3. List the aspects of life at Bonegilla that the photographer wishes to emphasise in **SOURCE 2**.
4. Do you think this picture is staged or natural? Justify your opinion.

6.5.3 Hardships faced by New Australians

Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell had assured the Australian people, ‘aliens are and will continue to be admitted only in such numbers and of such classes that they can readily be assimilated’. Assimilation is the process by which a minority group gives up its own customs and attitudes and adopts those of the prevailing culture. In this period, the concept of assimilation not only applied to immigrants, but also to Indigenous Australians.

Part of the role of a reception centre was to prepare new Australians for the world outside the camp. That meant familiarising them not only with formal written and spoken English, but with the food, culture, customs and attitudes of the Australian people they would encounter. Many Australians were wary of the high intake of migrants during the post-war years. They were afraid that migrants would take their job and would be unable to accept the Australian way of life. Because of this, they were sometimes racist towards new Australians, or attempted to exclude them from everyday life.

**Resisting assimilation**

As a result of the discrimination and lack of understanding shown to them, many immigrants settled in suburbs alongside their country folk. Here, they could practise their religion, speak their language, practise the trades for which they had originally been trained, play and support the sports that interested them, and socialise with members of their community. These neighbourhoods were pockets of resistance against the policy of assimilation.

**SOURCE 4** These perspectives from Italian immigrants who arrived in Western Australia during the post-war years reflect the tension between white Australians and new arrivals.

Giovanni arrived in Fremantle in March 1952, when he was 25. He remembers the discrimination he faced because of his heritage:

In that period, Italians were not well-regarded because of the war. People believed or thought that Italians were fierce . . . cruel.

Maria travelled to Australia in 1955, when she was 14. While her father fixed the railway line in Calingiri, Maria and her younger sister attended the local primary school. Sometimes, Maria would accompany her mother to the supermarket, where she experienced discrimination first-hand:

We used to go to the supermarket with my Mum and . . . [people] would say, ‘Talk in English, don’t talk in Italian, go back to your own country’.
SOURCE 5  Greek immigrants to Australia attend English language lessons at the Bonegilla Reception Centre near Alderbury, Victoria

6.5.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 Define, using examples from the text, what was meant by the concept of assimilation.
2 How did migrant reception centres attempt to assimilate immigrants?
3 How did immigrants who did not want to assimilate respond?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
4 In SOURCE 3, a former language instructor at Bonegilla describes the differing experience of residents and offers a couple of reasons for this difference. What other information might help to explain residents’ different perceptions of a reception centre?
5 Using evidence from SOURCES 3–5, explain why it was so hard for many newly arrived immigrants to adjust to life in Australia.
6 Compare your classroom to the one shown in SOURCE 5. Identify the features in the photograph that would make this classroom a difficult place to learn for the Greek immigrants shown here.

6.5.4 The migrant work experience

An important aspect of the assisted migration scheme was that immigrants would be placed into work shortly after arrival. After arriving in Australia, non-British immigrants’ professional qualifications were generally not recognised, and most immigrants were placed in the rapidly expanding areas of manufacturing and construction, where conditions were often difficult. Many faced prejudice from Australian co-workers and employers. This experience was very different from the rosy picture that had been painted by those employed to attract new migrants to Australia.

The majority of non-English speaking (NES) women who migrated to Australia in the years after 1947 found work in factories, with newer immigrants getting work in ‘dirtier’ industries such as meat and boot industries, some food processing, and cold storage; while women who had been in the country longer were able to move on to clothing, food and electrical industries. Difficulties understanding the language, limited job prospects and a lack of familiarity with their
rights meant that many migrant women had to accept discriminatory treatment by their bosses, and difficult or even dangerous working conditions.

During this era, some of the trades and occupations that the government needed immigrants to fill included:

- mechanical and electrical engineers
- boilermakers, welders, sheet metal and foundry workers (skilled and unskilled)
- textile and clothing operatives
- brick and pottery workers
- machinists in the clothing, textile, printing, canvas and leather trades
- boot factory operatives (skilled and unskilled)
- building and civil engineers
- general construction workers (skilled and unskilled, required for river, dam and quarrying jobs)
- sawmill and timber workers
- architects, surveyors, pharmaceutical chemists, doctors, dentists, nurses and household servants.

Life was more promising for those who gained work on large-scale projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme, which paid relatively high wages and allowed workers’ families to live nearby. Because they were so heavily reliant upon immigrant labour, these projects often allowed immigrants from different nationalities to maintain a semblance of their culture.

**SOURCE 6** This photograph, taken in 1960, shows European migrant workers employed to work on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

---

**New Australians boost the economy**

For Australia, this was a time of great economic growth. There were clear economic benefits in having a larger population — a greater number of workers meant more people to pay tax and to buy products such as houses, cars and washing machines. A larger workforce also allowed the country to become a greater exporter of merchandise, including primary goods (such as meat, wood and cereal grains) and manufactured foods (such as mineral ores, coal and crude petroleum).
6.5.4 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 How did the promise of work in Australia differ from the reality for many immigrants?
2 Outline and explain some of the workplace practices that discriminated against immigrants in this period.
3 Explain the benefits that Australia reaped from the assisted immigration program.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
4 SOURCE 6 illustrates a group of European migrant workers who participated in the construction of the Snowy Mountain hydroelectric plant. What physical attributes do these workers appear to have in common?
5 What does their physical appearance tell you about the nature of the work undertaken on the Snowy Mountain Scheme?

6.5 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
1 Today, third country or offshore processing centres for those seeking to come to Australia exist on Christmas Island, Papua New Guinea and Nauru. Using the internet, research one of these centres, then compare and contrast the experience described here about Bonegilla to the experience of refugees on Papua New Guinea’s Manus Island or somewhere similar.

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
2 Using the information provided here and your own research, address the following essay question: ‘To what extent did assisted migration allow Australia to flourish?’
3 Research an essay on the Snowy Mountain Scheme addressing the following question: ‘What contribution did migrants make to nation building in Australia through projects such as the Snowy Mountain Scheme?’

6.6 Immigration from Asia

6.6.1 The fall of Saigon and its effects

The Vietnam War began as a conflict between communist North Vietnam and South Vietnam. America feared that, if South Vietnam was allowed to fall to communism, it could lead neighbouring countries such as Laos, Cambodia and Thailand to do the same, creating what was known as the domino effect. After America sent troops to support South Vietnam, Australia followed suit, sending 60 000 personnel between 1962 and 1972. Of these personnel, 3129 would be injured and another 521 would be killed. During this time, many Australians joined the anti-war movement. When Australia and America withdrew from the conflict, number of Australians felt a new-found sense of duty to protect the Vietnamese people.

On 29 April 1975, after months of heavy American casualties and mass protests around the world, US President Gerald Ford ordered all American personnel out of South Vietnam, effectively declaring defeat. On 30 April the North Vietnamese Army, led by General Vo Nguyen Giap, entered Saigon in tanks and trucks. Earlier that day US helicopters had removed the last of the embassy’s staff, but Vietnamese citizens who had supported America’s battle against the general’s communist forces waited in vain for the choppers to carry them to safety. After more than two decades of
war, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos ‘fell’ to the communists. This would lead to an unprecedented number of Vietnamese to seek refuge in friendly nations around the world, including Australia.

6.6.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Describe the nature of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam conflict.
2. Why did America retreat and concede their involvement in Vietnam on 29 April 1975?
3. Why did so many South Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese people flee Indochina after 1975?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
4. Source 1 appeared on the front page of newspapers across the world in 1975. What aspects of the photograph make it so compelling?

6.6.2 The first ‘boat people’ arrive in Australia
In the months following the fall of Saigon, many South Vietnamese people fled their homelands, fearing persecution from the new communist government.

Escaping Vietnam was a difficult and dangerous experience for refugees. Many were afraid that they would be caught by the army as they attempted to leave and be sent back. There, they faced internment in a ‘re-education camp’, where they might be tortured or killed. Most refugees escaped by buying passage on a large boat (some of which could hold up to 400 people). Others used small fishing boats that were never designed for sailing in open sea. Some were picked up by large trawlers from countries like China, while many were lost at sea for months at a time. Because of the expense of escape, many families became separated during the process.

Estimates of the number of people who died attempting to flee Indochina in this period vary widely from 30,000 to 250,000. While many boats landed in neighbouring Asian nations such as Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand, others made it much further.

On 26 April 1976, a worn-out fishing boat named the Kein Giang limped along the coast of Darwin. After a two-month journey navigated by means of a page torn from a school atlas, 25-year-old Lam Binh and his four crewmates had reached their destination. The following day their boat was boarded by immigration officials. ‘Welcome on my boat,’ the captain said. ‘My name is Lam Binh and these are my friends from South Vietnam and we would like permission to stay in Australia!’ The arrival of this tiny fishing boat and its crew signalled the beginning of an influx of Indochinese ‘boat people’.

A moral and legal obligation
As a participant in the Vietnam War and signatory to the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Australia had both a moral and legal obligation to accept refugees from Indochina. In 1977, in response to the growing
number of refugees throughout Indochina, Australia developed its own refugee policy in which it formally acknowledged its responsibility to resettle a fair proportion of the world’s refugees. In 1979, during Vietnam’s war with the People’s Republic of China, the Vietnamese government targeted ethnic Chinese who had been living in Vietnam. Many fled the country, adding to the flood of Vietnamese refugees who arrived at their neighbouring countries by any means necessary. By 1984, Australia had accepted around 90 000 Indochinese refugees out of a total of 2 million. Two thousand of these had arrived as boat people, while the others had been processed in camps set up by the United Nations, either in Vietnam or in its neighbouring countries, and arrived by air.

SOURCE 3 South Australia’s lieutenant governor, Hieu Van Le, was a Vietnamese refugee. At 21, he set off, along with 50 other people, on a small fishing boat headed for anywhere that would accept them. This is an extract from an article appearing in a university magazine in 2008.

‘The skipper, a local fisherman, summoned us together and said he didn’t know which way to go or what else to do,’ said Mr Le.

‘We were mostly people from cities, many of us had never even been in a boat before. I waited for someone to come up with a solution. Nobody had any practical suggestions, neither the older people we deferred to or the professional people — everyone was arguing. Eventually, with youthful exuberance, frustration and some recklessness under the circumstances, I grabbed some paper and drew a map of Vietnam and the region as best I could remember.’

With roughly sketched map in hand, Mr Le announced that the only way to go was west which should bring them to Malaysia or Thailand. Two days later they saw fishing boats with Malaysian flags and Hieu Van Le was their acknowledged leader.

One major hurdle overcome, the next few days were nightmare material with coastguards turning them away, sometimes at gunpoint, every time they tried to land.

‘When you escape from one country to another in a fragile boat with very limited supplies, water and fuel, the first thing you want to do is to land at the nearest place you can. But it turned out to be quite impossible,’ said Mr Le.

‘Mentally we weren’t prepared for that. Before we left we were told by the so-called skippers and people in the know that once we’d successfully escaped the Vietnamese shore and made it into international waters there would be plenty of ships — a kind of highway of ships — that would pick us up and bring us to shore. It wasn’t happening. Nobody wanted us.’

6.6.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did most refugees escape Vietnam?
2. Why did many Australians feel a ‘moral obligation’ to accept Indochinese refugees?
3. What other obligations does a country have to refugees once they have been accepted?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

4. SOURCE 2 depicts a boatload of Vietnamese who had fled their homeland. What similarities and differences can you find between this image and Hieu Van Le’s description of his own sea voyage in SOURCE 3?
5. Apart from the physical dangers, what mental obstacles did Hieu Van Le and Lam Binh face when escaping Vietnam?

6.6.3 The Blainey debate

In 1984 Professor Geoffrey Blainey, a well-known historian and history author from the University of Melbourne, ignited a debate within the community and media. In a speech to a Rotary club in Warnambool, he suggested that the pace of Asian migration to Australia was too fast, that Asian immigrants were taking ‘Australian’ jobs, and that higher immigration rates would lead to racial conflict. The response from Professor Blainey’s contemporaries from the University of Melbourne was swift, with 24 academics publicly distancing themselves from what they believed were inflammatory and divisive statements. Students picketed his lectures, and he was forced to hire personal security after he and his family received death threats. Despite this negative response within the academic community, Professor Blainey’s views on Asian migration...
struck a chord with some Australians who feared that Vietnamese refugees represented an ‘Asian invasion’.

SOURCE 4 Geoffrey Blainey in an extract from the speech he gave to a meeting of Rotary at Warrnambool in March 1984 (the full text is in Blainey: Eye on Australia, 2001)

The unemployment in many Australian cities, more than any other factor, causes the present unease about the increasing rate of Asian immigration. These are the suburbs where the Asians are most likely to settle. These are the suburbs where they are most likely to work. But these are the suburbs where the rates of unemployment tend to be the highest.

It is easy for me in my secure job to say that I welcome Asian immigrants. I do welcome them, but they don’t compete with me for work, and they don’t alter the way of life where I live. I am not sure, however, that I would be so welcoming if I was out of work …

I support the idea, disseminated from Canberra, of a multicultural Australia. But many of the Ministers, backbenchers and civil servants who preach the merits of that society will, in their private life and much of their public life, prefer a one-culture Australia. Multiculturalism is often what is good for other people.

6.6.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 What aspect of Asian immigration did Professor Blainey object to in 1984?
2 What conclusions can we draw from the way in which Australians responded to Professor Blainey’s comments?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3 Identify the assumptions that Professor Blainey made in his 1984 speech about the impact of Asian immigration in Australian cities.
4 Professor Blainey argues that ‘Multiculturalism is often what is good for other people’. What do you think he meant by these comments?

6.6.4 Assimilation and lost identity

With the policy of assimilation having begun to give way to one of integration in the mid 1970s, the country was better prepared to assist refugees to resettle successfully. However, it was still very difficult for people to adapt to their new country and know how they could contribute to Australia while still holding on to the beliefs and practices that were important to them. Common problems experienced by Indochinese refugees included:
• little knowledge of English and, in many cases, little formal education
• few job prospects upon arrival
• being separated from family and friends
• the ongoing effects of physical and mental trauma and torture suffered in their homeland.

One strategy adopted by Indochinese refugees (which had been adopted by European immigrants 25 years earlier) was to form neighbourhoods where they could speak their own language, buy and sell their own food, and worship at their own temples. Suburbs with large Vietnamese populations included Richmond in Victoria, Darra in Brisbane and Cabramatta in New South Wales. Despite the positive attributes of these neighbourhoods, they often had a higher incidence of unemployment, crime and drug use than surrounding neighbourhoods. Because of this, some members of the Australian community and the media referred to Vietnamese neighbourhoods as ‘ghettos’. As these refugees fought to make a life for themselves in Australia, they were often subject to racism and social exclusion.

Being Asian–Australian today

Despite the attempts of some people to undermine the value of multiculturalism, Australia’s Asian communities have continued to grow and thrive. Today, like immigrants from other nations, Asian–Australians have made major contributions to all facets of Australian life. However, the lives of second- or third-generation Asian–Australians are very different from those of their parents and grandparents.
... My grandfather wrote poetry on great rolls of thin white paper with a paintbrush. He offered to read and explain his poems to me several times over the years, but I only let him do it once. I’d let my Chinese go by then, which made listening to him too much of an effort.

Though I was raised speaking Chinese, it wasn’t long before I lost my language skills. I spoke English all day at school, listened to English all night on TV. I didn’t see the point of speaking Chinese. We lived in Australia...

... At [his] funeral, my sadness was overshadowed by a sense of regret. I’d denied my grandfather the commonest of kindnesses. I was sixteen years old.

I am now twenty-six. A few weeks ago, during a family dinner at a Chinese restaurant, the waiter complimented my mum on the fact that I was speaking to her in Chinese. The waiter told Mum with a sigh that his own kids could barely string a sentence together in Chinese. Mum told the waiter I had stopped speaking Chinese a few years into primary school, but that I had suddenly started up again in my late teens.

I have often wondered how aware my mum is of the connection between Grandad’s death and my ever improving Chinese. Whenever I am stuck for a word, I ask her. Whenever I am with her, or relatives, or a waiter at a Chinese restaurant, or a sales assistant at a Chinese department store, I practise. I am constantly adding new words to my Chinese vocabulary, and memorising phrases I can throw into a conversation at will.

It is an organic way of relearning a language. Textbooks and teachers are not necessary, since I am only interested in mastering the spoken word. I am not interested in the written word or in the many elements of Chinese culture of which I am ignorant. I am not trying to ‘discover my roots’. I am simply trying to ensure that the next time an elderly relative wants me to listen to them, I am not only willing, I am able.
6.7 Australia’s evolving immigration policy

6.7.1 Multiculturalism in Australia

Until 1966, immigrants coming to Australia were expected to assimilate — that is, to behave like the Australians already living here. From 1966 to 1973, the government encouraged immigrants to integrate, meaning that they would have to live like Anglo Australians in public, but could follow their own cultural practices at home. From the mid-1970s on, policy towards immigrants shifted towards multiculturalism — respect and equality for everybody regardless of their cultural background. However, even as the majority of Australians began to support a shift towards a new, more inclusive Australia, others within the community, the media and politics would oppose it.

Within multicultural Australian society, immigrants were still required to respect Australia’s laws and become part of the Australian community, while being encouraged to value and maintain the traditions and customs of their countries of origin. Laws such as the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 made it illegal to discriminate against others on the basis of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. In 1977, the Fraser government commissioned a report by Frank Galbally, a Melbourne QC who had defended Bonegilla ‘rioters’ in the mid-1960s. In his report, Galbally made a number of recommendations to give immigrants a ‘fair go’. These included ensuring that:

- immigrants had equal access to services as did other members of society
- everyone was entitled to maintain their own culture while understanding others’
- while immigrants’ needs should eventually be met by mainstream programs and services, in the short term they would require more targeted service provision
- services should assist immigrants to become self-reliant as quickly as possible.

This report led to a number of improvements in migrant services, including creating more ethnic schools, English language tuition and translation services, and migrant resource centres. In 1980 the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) was established to conduct research and provide the government with ongoing policy advice. To give the migrant community a ‘voice’, ethnic radio was extended and the government established an ethnic television review panel.

Multiculturalism and the media: Channel 0/28

Frank Galbally had submitted his report, but still felt there was more he could do for immigrants. In 1975, the government had supported the creation of two multilingual radio stations, 2EA Sydney and 3EA Melbourne, which had achieved real success in giving immigrants access to news and entertainment. Based on their success, Galbally set about trying to introduce a television service that would ‘open up Australia’ to immigrants.

He found a willing ally in Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who appointed one of his senior advisers, Petro Georgiou, as Secretary of the Ethnic Television Review Panel. It was this committee, and its supporters, that developed Channel 0/28, the first multicultural television service in the world. Bruce Gyngell, who had famously welcomed Australian audiences to the first Australian television broadcast in 1956, officially launched the station on 24 October 1980 with the words, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, good evening, and welcome to multicultural television.’

From the start, Channel 0/28 promised ‘a world of entertainment’. Its first program, the documentary Who are we?, explored the history of immigration to Australia. The network changed its name to the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in 1985.

Through its coverage of news, sport and entertainment, SBS has established a strong foothold in the Australian entertainment industry. Paradoxically, SBS illustrated the power of television to make the world a smaller place when its annual coverage of the Eurovision Song Contest was so well regarded by the organisers that they allowed Australia to enter this European competition.

SOURCE 2 illustrates the pivotal role of SBS in representing Australia as a country that embraces its multiculturalism.
SOURCE 1 In a speech to the Institute of Multicultural Affairs on 30 November 1981, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser outlines the importance of Channel 0/28 in representing the interests and reflecting the identity of Australia’s migrant community.

... It is very deliberately entitled ‘multicultural’ not ‘ethnic television’, because its intended audience is all Australians, whatever languages they speak, whatever their particular ethnic and cultural identity. Multicultural television has screened an impressive range of high-quality international programs and presented aspects of Australian life which other channels have tended to ignore. Many of the achievements of the first twelve months have been encouraging. The news program, for example, has been widely praised in media circles for the scope of its international coverage. Channel 0/28 has established a viewing audience not just from ethnic communities but from the community at large. Even the sceptics have been impressed. Indeed it was an unusual, but not unpleasant experience to have the Age reversing its initial editorial stance by admitting that ‘Channel 0/28 is making its critics (ourselves included) eat their words’.

SOURCE 2 Australia’s Dami Im performing at Eurovision 2016. Her performance won her second place.

6.7.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 Using the text, explain the difference between integration and multiculturalism as policy positions.
2 Identify and explain the legal rights and responsibilities that surrounded the introduction of multiculturalism.
3 Outline the improvements in migrant services that resulted from the introduction of multiculturalism as a formal government policy.
4 Why was Channel 0/28 (SBS) created? What role was it chartered to have?
5 What was unique about this service?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
6 In SOURCE 1, Malcolm Fraser explains that Channel 0/28 is ‘multicultural’ rather than ‘ethnic’. What do you think is the difference in meaning?
7 How, according to Prime Minister Fraser, was SBS providing a service to all Australians?
8 What is the paradox (an apparent contradiction) of Dami Im (see SOURCE 2) competing for Australia in the Eurovision Song Contest?
6.7.2 The One Nation Party ignites debate

After more than a decade of recognising and valuing cultural diversity in the name of multiculturalism, in 1989 Australia adopted the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia. The agenda built on the recommendations of the Galbally Report, outlining the rights and responsibilities of all Australians, whether of Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic or non-English-speaking background, and whether born in Australia or overseas. This was not universally embraced by all Australians and there were those who attacked the very premise of a multicultural country.

Pauline Hanson, a former fish-and-chip shop proprietor and self-proclaimed ‘Aussie battler’, gained her first major political victory in 1996, when she ran for the House of Representatives as a Liberal candidate in the seat of Oxley. Just before the election, however, she was disendorsed by the Liberal Party after making comments regarding benefits given to Indigenous Australians. With no other Liberal candidate in the running, and her name already on the ballot paper, she was voted in anyway, but was forced to sit as an Independent. Because of her controversial views on multiculturalism and what she perceived as an ‘unfair advantage’ being given to Indigenous Australians, she quickly captured the attention of the ‘far right’ of politics. In 1997 Hanson, David Oldfield and David Ettridge founded the One Nation Party, a nationalist party (a party that promotes the interest of its own country ahead of others) that would gain 22 per cent of the vote in Queensland’s 1998 state election and 9 per cent of the vote in the federal election. Eighteen years later, in the double dissolution Federal election of 2016, Pauline Hanson and One Nation re-emerged as a political force to win four seats in the Senate.

SOURCE 3 In her maiden speech to Parliament in 1996, Pauline Hanson makes her views on the rights of Australia’s multicultural population very clear.

Immigration and multiculturalism are issues that this government is trying to address, but for far too long ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debate by the major parties. I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995, 40 per cent of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. Of course, I will be called racist but, if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united.

SOURCE 4 In this satirical photographic portrait, photographer Emma Phillips portrays Pauline Hanson as an ‘Aussie battler’ cleaning up the mess made of Australia.
6.7.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 By 1989, the government was committed to a multicultural Australia, how was this made clear?
2 How did Pauline Hanson gain entry into Parliament?
3 How did the One Nation Party come into existence?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
4 Note the language used by Pauline Hanson in SOURCE 3. In what ways does she try to include the audience in her argument?
5 What pejorative (disparaging or insulting) language does she use to make her case?
6 How else does she try to convince her audience of her argument?
7 Consider the satirical image of Pauline Hanson in SOURCE 4, what statement is the artist trying to make by depicting Pauline Hanson as an old-fashioned ‘Aussie battler’?
8 Is this representation a positive or negative depiction of Hanson? Justify your response.

6.7.3 Multiculturalism today

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser once called multiculturalism ‘the most intelligent and appropriate response to the diversity which characterises our society’. This view is still prevalent today and there is a significant agreement amongst all major Australian political parties that multiculturalism is an attractive feature of our national identity. Indeed, the Australian government is so committed to multiculturalism that part of the charter of the Department of Social Services is to provide protection for our multicultural nature. SOURCE 5 is a 2014 document that outlines the government’s stance on what multiculturalism means today.

SOURCE 5 What is multiculturalism?

In a descriptive sense multicultural is simply a term which describes the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia. We are, and will remain, a multicultural society.

As a public policy multiculturalism encompasses government measures designed to respond to that diversity. It plays no part in migrant selection. It is a policy for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole.

The Commonwealth Government has identified three dimensions of multicultural policy:

a cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion;

b social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and

c economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilize effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.

There are also limits to Australian multiculturalism. These may be summarized as follows:

• multicultural policies are based upon the premises that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests and future first and foremost;

• multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society — the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes; and

• multicultural policies impose obligations as well as conferring rights: the right to express one’s own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values.

As a necessary response to the reality of Australia’s cultural diversity, multicultural policies aim to realize a better Australia characterized by an enhanced degree of social justice and economic efficiency.

6.7.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 What are the three rights that Australia’s multicultural policy protects?
2 What are the three responsibilities it asks for in return?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3 How is Prime Minister Fraser’s opinion on multiculturalism replicated in the opening lines of SOURCE 5?
4 What, according to SOURCE 5, is the aim of multicultural policies?
6.7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
1 How do the sources in this subtopic provide evidence for changing attitudes to immigrants over the period 1996–1998?

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT
2 Explain the reasons why Australia moved from integration to multiculturalism.
3 Outline the advantages that this shift provided for Australians.
4 In embracing this shift, was the government ever out of step with the desires and opinions of the Australian people? Justify your response.
5 Review Pauline Hanson’s maiden speech to Parliament, does she have a point? Can a multicultural country be strong or united? Justify your response.
6 Discuss in small groups, and from your own point of view, evidence of how well multiculturalism is working in Australia today.

6.8 Seeking asylum in Australia

6.8.1 What is a refugee?
Global events at the end of the twentieth century led to an increase in the numbers of people from the Middle East and central Asia seeking asylum. Refugees have left these conflict-ridden areas for Europe via land routes, and towards Australia via Indonesia, undertaking dangerous sea voyages. Australia’s immigration policies towards boat arrivals has been a source of debate within the Australian community.

A refugee is somebody who has fled their country because they fear they will be persecuted for their race, religion, nationality or beliefs. As of 2014, the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR estimates the number of people displaced by war, conflict or persecution reached a record high of nearly 60 million around the world.

The number of people forced to flee their homes rose by 8.3 million from the previous year. As a member of the UN and a signatory to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Australia is obliged to offer protection to refugees against their forced return and to consider their requests for asylum (protection). It is also obliged to accept a reasonable number of refugees each year.
6.8.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1 Outline the differences between a refugee, an asylum seeker and an immigrant.
2 Explain Australia’s responsibility to refugees as a member of the United Nations.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE
3 Compare the number of refugees held in offshore detention facilities and the number held on the mainland. Which number is greater?
4 Choose three facts from SOURCE 1 that surprise you. Explain your selections to a partner.
5 How many asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat are legitimate refugees and how many could be labelled ‘queue-jumpers’ (those not going through the formal refugee process)?
6 Which of these facts could you use to promote the idea that Australia does or does not have a significant refugee problem? Justify your selections.

6.8.2 The Tampa incident

Australia recognises two types of refugees. The first type, who resettle under official humanitarian programs are selected overseas and enter Australia with a visa. This entitles them to permanent residency and the right to apply for citizenship. The second type arrive unofficially, many of them by boat, after typically paying people smugglers thousands of dollars for passage to Australia.

In August 2001 a Norwegian cargo vessel, the MV Tampa, rescued 438 men, women and children from an overcrowded, sinking fishing vessel 140 kilometres north-west of Christmas Island. Those on board (from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) had fled an Indonesian refugee camp and were seeking sanctuary in Australia. When the ship’s captain radioed to ask Australia for medical assistance for the asylum seekers, the government sent in Australia’s Special Air Service (SAS) instead. Opposition Leader Kim Beazley expressed his support for the government’s response.

Prime Minister Howard claimed that, as a sovereign nation, Australia had a right to protect its borders. He argued that by not going through the formal refugee process, these people were ‘queue jumping’, and insisted, ‘We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.’ The Australian government refused to allow the Tampa to enter Australian waters. Many Australians opposed the government’s position, claiming it was inhumane and against international law.

SOURCE 2 According to statements made by the Tampa’s captain, by the time he picked up the asylum seekers many were in poor health. Some were unconscious, while others were suffering from dysentery.
The government's actions were successfully challenged in the federal court, but the government won a subsequent appeal. Some asylum seekers were transferred to New Zealand, but others were sent to Nauru and Papua New Guinea as part of the government's 'Pacific solution', where their applications for asylum often took months or even years to process. Subsequently, the government changed the law to remove its outer islands, including Christmas Island, from Australia's migration zone, meaning that those who sought to enter Australia without following the proper refugee process had to set foot on the Australian mainland before they would be processed. Due, in part, to this hard-line stance on asylum seekers, the Coalition won a decisive victory in the federal election of 2001.

**6.8.2 Activities**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. Describe the two categories of refugees recognised by Australia.
2. Outline why the Tampa incident divided public opinion.
3. Why did Australia remove outer islands such as Christmas Island from its migration zone following the Tampa incident?

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
4. Based on **SOURCE 2**, how would you describe the conditions aboard the Tampa, the appearance of the asylum seekers and their possessions? What other sources would you need in order to further investigate these aspects of the asylum seekers' voyage?
5. What do you think the photographer was trying to emphasise with **SOURCE 2**? Why do you think it has been shot from this height and distance? Has this influenced your previous answer?

**6.8.3 Mandatory detention**

Since the *Tampa affair* of 2001, asylum seekers have continued to play an important role in Australian politics. Discussions tend to focus on the refugees' right to be here and their treatment while in detention. According to Australia's *Migration Act 1958*, people who do not have a valid visa, and are therefore in Australia unlawfully, must be detained. They are not held prisoner, but are under 'administrative detention'. Once placed in detention, occupants are given the opportunity to apply for citizenship. If citizenship is granted, they can stay in Australia without restrictions; if not, they will be deported from the country as soon as possible. Australian detention facilities have included centres at Villawood, Northam, Shergar, Maribyrnong, Wickham Point and Yongah Hill.

Standards have been developed to ensure that people detained in Australia are treated humanely and in a way that respects their gender, culture, health and age. According to the Department of Immigration, services available at each detention facility include:
- health services
- educational programs, including English-language instruction
- cultural, recreational and sporting activities
- religious services
- availability of telephones, newspapers and television
- culturally appropriate meals and snacks and unlimited access to chilled water, tea, coffee, milk and sugar.

These services may have been provided at Australian detention centres, but as **SOURCE 3** illustrates that is not necessarily the case with offshore detention centres. These centres had been abandoned in 2008 but the tragic crash of *SIEV 221* on Christmas Island in December 2010 (see 6.1.1 *Links with our times*) forced the government to address the people-smuggling trade. If asylum seekers could be dissuaded from getting on boats, lives could be saved. This caused the Gillard government in 2012 to revert (in the face of much criticism)
to the ‘Pacific solution’ and they re-opened detention facilities on Nauru in September 2012 and on Manus Island, some two months later. Once again, treatment of potential immigrants became a political ‘hot potato’ and decidedly influenced federal elections. In July 2013, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, in an attempt to retain his party’s hold on power, introduced a stricter refugee policy with the cooperation of the government of Papua New Guinea. Under this policy, no asylum seeker who arrived by boat would be granted a visa. This meant that the facilities at Manus Island (approximately 1070 kilometres north of Cape York) would be enlarged. This did not save Prime Minister Rudd who lost power in September 2013. His successor, Tony Abbott, through his immigration minister, Scott Morrison, introduced ‘Operation Sovereign Borders’ which has had a significant impact on the number of boats landing on Australian territory. Boats were turned back by the Australian Coast Guard and Navy and the numbers of refugees in offshore facilities has increased.

**SOURCE 3** A room on Manus Island used for the detention of asylum seekers. This photograph comes from an official handout provided by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

### 6.6.3 Activities

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**
1. Under the government’s mandatory detention policy, who was detained and for how long?
2. According to the government, in what conditions were they detained?
3. When and why did Australia return to offshore detention centres for processing asylum seekers?
4. List some of the facilities and services provided at Australia’s offshore detention centres.

**USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**
5. Using **SOURCE 3**, identify what facilities are provided in the rooms for detained asylum seekers. Does this image match the list provided in the text by the Department of Immigration?
6. Why would the government allow this photograph to be used as part of their official handout on detention centre facilities? What would they be trying to emphasise or de-emphasise? Why?
7. Given that this photograph is from a government source, how reliable is it for an historian studying this topic?
6.8.4 Criticisms of mandatory detention

The major criticisms of mandatory detention include the time taken to process visa applicants, the isolation that many occupants experience while detained and the large number of children held in detention. One of the most controversial sites was the Woomera Immigration Reception and Processing Centre in South Australia. Originally designed in 1997 for 400 occupants, at its peak Woomera held more than twice that number, putting a strain on the centre’s facilities. In the summer of 2002, some occupants lit fires in some of the centre’s smaller buildings and sewed their own lips shut in protest at what they perceived as inhumane treatment, while around 300 detainees conducted a hunger strike. Thousands of Australians marched in support of the detainees’ rights to be heard. In response to the turmoil at Woomera, the United Nations launched an investigation into the conditions at two of Australia’s detention centres and concluded that conditions could ‘in many ways be considered inhumane and degrading’.

Woomera has been overshadowed by more recent events at Manus Island as Australia has returned to offshore processing of asylum seekers. Manus Island, the largest of the offshore detention centres along with the facility at Nauru, has been the subject of significant outrage. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International have labelled the conditions inhumane, as has Australian Greens’ senator Sarah Hanson-Young. There have been riots, hunger strikes and allegations of sexual abuse. Reza Barati, a 23-year-old Iranian asylum seeker, was killed during a riot on Manus Island in February 2014. This set off a rush of protests across Australia within days. Similar protests have been occurring intermittently since then. SOURCE 4 shows a protest in Melbourne in February 2016 against children in detention.

6.8.4 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. For what reasons do Australians criticise mandatory detention?
2. Given the criticism, why do governments continue to maintain these centres?
3. What commonalities have occurred in both domestic and offshore detention centres? What conclusions can you draw from this?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

4. What do you notice about the nature and composition of the crowd in SOURCE 4?
5. Why are these people protesting? Who do you think is the intended audience for their protest? What appeals are they making?

6.8.5 The response to asylum seekers

As the number of asylum seekers around the world grows, the Australian government faces a practical and moral dilemma. Election results would seem to suggest that the Australian public wants strict border control, but large swathes of the Australian public argue for humane reform. The government has tried to lay blame at the feet of people smugglers and has suggested that the asylum seekers are not legitimate, despite evidence to the contrary. SOURCE 5 illustrates the type of poster that is being used overseas to warn off queue jumpers, but a growing number of Australians, shocked at the world refugee crisis, have influenced government and forced a change of policy. In September 2015, Australia increased its intake of Syrian refugees by 12 000. SOURCE 6 sums up the problem that is facing both politicians and the public.

DID YOU KNOW?

At the current rate of arrivals, it would take 20 years for asylum seekers to fill the MCG.
SOURCE 5 A warning poster from the Australian government in Arabic. The main caption states, ‘No way! You will not make Australia home’. Underneath it adds, ‘If you get on a boat without a visa, you will not end up in Australia’.

SOURCE 6 In this article, published in the Griffith Law Review, the authors discuss some of the problems with the way the asylum seeker debate has been presented to the Australian public.

The problem is that the issues underlying irregular and forced migration are very complex. In this ‘sound bite’ age of instant communication...
6.9 The migrant contribution

6.9.1 Addressing the ‘skills shortage’

Today Australia has a population of over 24 million people, over one-quarter of whom were born overseas. While English is the most commonly spoken language, more than 200 other languages are spoken by Australians, including 62 Indigenous languages. Immigration policies continue to change to reflect political and economic changes within Australia and the rest of the world. Immigrants have added to our cultural heritage by making Australia a more inclusive and cosmopolitan nation.

Immigration policy continues to be based on the government’s need to fill shortfalls in Australia’s skilled workforce. Entry is competitive and is based on a points system designed to ‘deliver the best and brightest skilled migrants’. The number of points a potential applicant is ‘worth’ is based on factors such as age, qualifications, relevant work experience and English proficiency. In 2009, as the global financial crisis squeezed economies around the world, the Australian government gave priority to migrants who were sponsored by Australian businesses, meaning they already had guaranteed work with an employer. This was part of a strategy to increase demand-rather than supply-driven immigration.

By 2014 this meant that the number of skilled migrants entering Australia was increasing significantly and more than twice as many migrants came to Australia to fill employment needs than to reunite with family members.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Temporary Work Visa which allows skilled workers to come to Australia is commonly referred to as the 457 visa. A business can sponsor someone for this visa if they cannot find an Australian citizen or permanent resident to do the skilled work. India is the most popular country of origin of applications for this visa.
6.9.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Identify the key fact in the previous text that illustrates that Australia is a multicultural nation.
2. On what grounds are immigrants more likely to be admitted to Australia?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

3. Identify the most significant changes to Australia’s migration program since 1993.
4. According to SOURCE 1, how many immigrants in percentage terms have been sponsored to immigrate?
5. Identify the facts that the creators of SOURCE 1 wish to emphasise. How do they do that?
6. Could you argue that SOURCE 1 could be reasonably labelled as propaganda? Justify your response.

6.9.2 Australia’s changing relations with its neighbours

Australia’s changing approach to immigration has improved the economic and political ties between Australia and its neighbours. When the White Australia policy was in full force, the country saw the United Kingdom and Europe as its major partners in international matters. These links began to loosen as Australia welcomed its first wave of immigrants in the post-war years. However, it was in the 1970s and 1980s, as Australia opened its doors to 90,000 Indochinese refugees, that the country would become a more important player in the Asia–Pacific region. In 1974, Australia became the first ‘dialogue partner’ of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), while Gareth Evans, the Labor government’s foreign affairs minister, chaired the first meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 1989. Both organisations promote trade and cooperation among member nations and discuss economic, political, social and cultural issues at their annual meetings.

Today, the country’s largest migrant intake comes from China and India, while China, Japan and the United States are Australia’s largest trade partners. Australia has successfully redefined itself as a valuable member of this region.

Throughout this period of change, immigrants’ continuing connections with their countries of origin have deepened ties and understandings between Australia and other countries. Today, Australia’s third biggest export (after coal and iron ore) is educational services. In some cases,
this involves teachers and/or curriculum being sent around the world, while in others it involves international students studying Australian programs within Australia. International students are entitled to stay in Australia while studying a full-time course and may be accompanied by their spouse and dependent children. When the student returns to their country of origin, the student will convey what they have learned about Australia to family and friends, thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding.

**SOURCE 2** World leaders and delegates pose for a photograph at the Group of 20 (G20) summit in Brisbane, Australia, 15 November 2014. The Australian prime minister at the time, Tony Abbott, is in the front row between Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister, and President Xi Jinping of China. The Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, is just behind on the left of the Australian prime minister.

**SOURCE 3** Traditional Indian dance performance during Diwali celebrations at Federation Square Melbourne in October 2014.
6.9.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1 In what way have changes in trade policy made Australia a more valuable member of the Asia-Pacific?

2 Identify and explain the benefits of ‘importing’ education.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

3 SOURCE 2 is a carefully posed photograph. What cultural statement is possibly being made by the positioning of the Australian prime minister?

4 SOURCE 3 shows an aspect of Diwali celebrations. Diwali is a Hindu festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil, lightness over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. In what ways is this festival an appropriate way to celebrate Australia’s migration story?

6.9.3 The impact of migration on Australia’s cultural heritage

Migration has enhanced the Australian nation in the full range of human endeavour. In education, science, business, artistic expression, sporting pursuits and other areas, the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of migrants has helped the country prosper in the true sense of that word. In the business world, migrants like Richard Pratt, Harry Triguboff, Zhenya Tsvetnenko, Maha Sinnathamby and Frank Lowy have created wealth and opportunity for Australians.

Frank Lowy’s story is amazing. Born in Czechoslovakia in 1930, he became a refugee during World War II, before travelling to Australia in 1953. Over the following decades, he would establish the Westfield shopping empire in Australia and the United States. To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his arrival in Australia in 2003, Lowy donated the funds to establish the Lowy Institute, an independent think tank which aims to ‘generate new ideas and dialogue on international developments and Australia’s role in the world’. He has also been the chairman of the Football Federation of Australia and he crowned his time overseeing the Australian team secure victory in the Asian Cup in 2015.

This victory is captured in SOURCE 4 where the Australian captain, Mile Jedinak, the son of Croatian immigrants, proudly wears the green and gold. Indeed, the Socceroos and Matildas owe much of their success to the migrant experience. Mark Viduka, Tim Cahill and Emily van Egmond are a few of the stars who have donned the national strip and are all the progeny of immigrants to Australia. Many other sports boast elite athletes from migrant backgrounds, such as boxer Kostya Tszyu, pole vaulter Tatiana Grigorieva, tennis player Mark Philippoussis and golfer Minjee Lee.

Artistic endeavours have also been augmented by the migrant experience. In the design arts, Harry Seidler, an Austrian refugee from Nazi Europe, helped define modern architecture in Australia. Legendary Australian musicians like John Farnham and Jimmy Barnes were born in the United Kingdom, as were artists Russell Drysdale and Tom Roberts. All of these artists have produced works that are frequently referred to as quintessentially Australian and in many ways, it’s their migrant background that has helped them form those iconic works.
6.9.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
1. Define the term ‘heritage’.
2. Using the text, could you argue that immigration has enhanced Australia’s cultural heritage?

6.9 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
1. In what ways did official government policies about trade and immigration gradually make Australia less a distant partner of the United Kingdom and more a part of Asia?
2. In what ways have immigrants contributed to Australia’s heritage? In order to answer this question fully, you will need to look back through the topic and identify the most important ways in which immigration has changed Australia. You may also like to use your library or the internet to research certain aspects more fully. Present your response in a written and visual presentation.

6.10 SkillBuilder: Conducting a historical inquiry

What is historical inquiry?
Historical inquiry is a process that involves formulating inquiry questions, identifying evidence such as primary and secondary sources, then interrogating, interpreting, analysing and evaluating those sources in order to reach conclusions about an event or events from the past.

Go to your learnON to access:
- An explanation of the skill (Tell me)
- The step-by-step process involved in developing the skill, with an example (Show me)
- An activity to allow you to practise the skill (Let me do it)
- Questions to test your application of the skill (Applying skills)

6.11 Review

This final subtopic provides a range of opportunities for you to review and respond through:
i. revising and checking your historical knowledge
ii. demonstrating your ability to apply historical concepts and skills.

Go to your learnON course to access:
- A key chronology of events relevant to the topic
- A summary of the key knowledge presented in the topic
- A ‘Big Questions’ activity
- A multiple choice topic test
- Short answer or extended writing responses

DID YOU KNOW?
In 2010, Business Review Weekly estimated that Frank Lowy was worth over $5 billion, making him Australia’s richest person at the time.