

Australian immigration and migrant assimilation  
1945 to 1960

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## Abstract

In 1947 Australia embarked on a large scale immigration program that resulted in the settlement of over 1 million migrants over the next 15 years. The grandiose nature of this program and its ideological underpinnings of migrant assimilation dominate this period of Australian immigration history. The orthodox perception of this often referred to but surprisingly under-researched policy is that it was a dogmatic drive for migrant assimilation into the existing Australian culture. How, then, does the nation come to accept these immigrants and transform itself into a celebrated multicultural state in the space of the next 30 years?

This thesis contends that Australia's postwar policy of migrant assimilation is more nuanced than this perception allows. If we accept that the ostensibly uncompromising rhetoric of assimilation defined the migrant experience, this will lead to a skewed understanding of what was actually transpiring at this crucial transitional moment in Australia's immigration history.

This thesis argues that the implications of postwar migrant assimilation policy cannot be understood without examining government and grass roots initiatives towards migrant settlement. By examining both government and community responses to the policy of assimilation, at the national and local level and through a German migrant case study, this thesis reveals the existence of a subtle but important social and administrative dialogue on the settlement needs of migrants.

This thesis demonstrates that regardless of its initial conception or accompanying rhetoric, postwar assimilation fostered a growing national dialogue and exchange of information on the migrant situation. Coupled with the tireless work of many individual public servants, community bodies and Australian citizens, this dialogue established channels of communication and fostered reciprocal relationships that enhanced the provision of settlement services for migrants. This dialogue also sanctioned the negotiation, interpretation and implementation of policy at both the national and grass roots levels. The goals of this reciprocal process were more akin to achieving migrant 'settlement' rather than 'assimilationist' outcomes. Ultimately this thesis demonstrates that the relationships and processes engendered by the policy of assimilation inform our understanding of the period as the progenitor of Australian multiculturalism.

## Thesis Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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**Kristy Kokegei**  
**28 September 2012**

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACC</b>	Australian Citizenship Convention
<b>ANU</b>	Australian National University
<b>AP</b>	Assisted Passage
<b>CIAC</b>	Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council
<b>CMO</b>	Commonwealth Migration Officer
<b>DP</b>	Displaced Person
<b>ELCA</b>	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia
<b>FF</b>	Full Fare paying migrant visa
<b>GAPS</b>	German Assisted Passage Scheme
<b>GNC</b>	Good Neighbour Council
<b>GNM</b>	Good Neighbour Movement
<b>ICEM</b>	Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration
<b>IRO</b>	International Refugee Organisation
<b>LAA</b>	Lutheran Archives of Australia
<b>LWF</b>	Lutheran World Federation
<b>LWFSS</b>	Lutheran World Federation Sponsorship Scheme
<b>MV</b>	Migrant Visa
<b>NLA</b>	National Library of Australia
<b>NSL</b>	New Settlers League
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>NAA</b>	National Archives of Australia
<b>SA</b>	South Australia
<b>SAR</b>	South Australian Railways
<b>SLSA</b>	State Library of South Australia
<b>SP</b>	Special Projects [migrant]
<b>TAS</b>	Tasmania

<b>UELCA</b>	United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia
<b>VIC</b>	Victoria
<b>YMCA</b>	Young Men's Christian Association
<b>YWCA</b>	Young Women's Christian Association

## Introduction

This thesis offers a nuanced reinterpretation of an often discussed but surprisingly under-researched period of Australian immigration history, that of migrant assimilation in 1950s Australia. In 1947, with a population of 7,579,358 people, Australia embarked on a large scale immigration program that resulted in over one million migrants settling in Australia over the next 15 years.<sup>1</sup> The grandiose nature of the undertaking and its assimilationist ideology dominate this period of Australian immigration history. Current scholarship simultaneously derides this ideology while acknowledging Australia's relative success in settling millions of migrants since 1945. The staunch Anglo-British assimilationist rhetoric of the early 1950s is at odds with the mass immigration of non-English speaking Europeans to Australia during the 1950s and 1960s and the arrival of the first Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s. Australians have witnessed the gradual abolition of the White Australia policy along with the rapid expansion of immigration policies to Asian, South American, Middle Eastern and African nations. Before the end of the twentieth century these progressive shifts in immigration policy had resulted in the heralding of Australia as a successful multicultural society. In the context of this incremental liberalisation of immigration policy over the course of some thirty-five years after World War Two, my thesis seeks to understand the government's policy of migrant assimilation: how it was articulated, implemented and enforced at all levels of society and ultimately what bearing this had on newly arriving migrants and the wider Australian community. My thesis argues that assimilation in this period was more nuanced than it is commonly understood to have been. As a result of this, my thesis argues, assimilation formed the foundation for multiculturalism, the genesis of which can be found in the reciprocal relationships forming between bureaucracy, agency and community in 1950s Australia. This theory of the genesis of multiculturalism is at odds with the orthodox perception of the postwar immigration period as, at worst, an episode of dogmatically imposed migrant assimilation and widespread xenophobia or, at best, community indifference to the migrant presence in Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, *Immigration: Federation to century's end. 1901-2000* (Canberra: Department of Immigration, October, 2001), 18.



This thesis does not suggest that migrants had an easy time settling in 1950s Australian society, nor that they were afforded rights commensurate with the wider Australian community. Throughout this thesis it is acknowledged that migrants were victimised and ostracised, discriminated against, forced out of necessity to live and work in sub-standard conditions, struggled to have their qualifications recognised, were not provided with adequate language support services, and were often not made aware of existing avenues of financial, social and welfare support available to them in Australia. As we will see below, scholars including James Jupp, Eric Richards, Anne-Marie Jordens, Gwenda Tavan, Janis Wilton and Richard Bosworth all highlight the very real discrimination migrants experienced at the hands of both the Australian government and the local communities into which they settled.<sup>2</sup> However, this thesis maintains that the difficulties inherent in the migration process, evidence of racism and discrimination, the presence of bureaucratic assimilationist rhetoric and local fears and hostility towards migrants all obscure a subtle but important process underlying the settlement of postwar European migrants: the interplay between bureaucracy, agency, community and, eventually, migrants charged with the negotiation and implementation of assimilationist policy in 1950s Australian society.

The thesis concludes that migrant assimilation was more akin to a ‘re-settlement’ policy than to the enforcement of total absorption into the existing culture. Rather than assimilation necessitating the migrants’ ‘casting off of their language, customs and national sentiments, and becoming indistinguishable within an “Anglo-Celtic” core culture’, assimilation became increasingly occupied with the provision of practical settlement assistance and the creation of new Australian citizens.<sup>3</sup> Key to this increasingly collaborative approach was the Australian Government’s desire to maintain the as yet unarticulated aim of social cohesion in the face of mass European migration, rather than a literal translation of the rhetoric of assimilation.

The international postwar context explains to some degree the dichotomy between Australia’s mass immigration program and its perceived identity as a homogeneous British nation. Between 1945 and 1970 the world experienced postwar population movements on a previously unimaginable scale. Soon after the end of the Second World War, that is by 1947,

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<sup>2</sup> See also Egon F Kunz, *Displaced Persons. Calwell’s New Australians* (Sydney: Australian National University Press, 1988), esp. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Lewins, ‘Assimilation and Integration,’ in *The Australian People: An encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, ed. James Jupp (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001), 752.

almost 11 million refugees were stranded in Europe as a direct consequence of war.<sup>4</sup> Living largely in makeshift camps throughout Western Europe these refugees, or Displaced Persons as they were more commonly known, began to leave Europe in the millions, migrating to countries such as the United States of America, Canada, South America and Australia. In 1947, buoyed by full employment, an expanding economy, high demand for food and services, labour and material shortages, and the need for industrial expansion, the Australian Government embarked on a mass immigration program under the slogan ‘populate or perish’.<sup>5</sup> Looking initially to the refugee camps of Europe, by 1951 Australia had settled over 180,000 Displaced Persons (DPs).<sup>6</sup> Wanting to maximise its intake of non-refugees, the Australian Government also embarked on a series of formal migration agreements with European countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Malta, Italy, Turkey, Yugoslavia and West Germany.<sup>7</sup> By 1955 Australia had welcomed its millionth postwar migrant.<sup>8</sup> What transpired, then, was a large-scale social experiment in settling European migrants into an overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic British society.

This thesis is divided into three parts. In Part One an analysis of the sources operates largely at the macro level by focusing on the policy of assimilation within government instrumentalities such as the Department of Immigration and the fostering of social and administrative collaboration. Part Two reorients the reader to consider evidence at the micro level, examining how this phenomenon of assimilation played out in a particular (Australian Lutheran) community setting in Chapters Three and Four. Finally, Part Three brings together the macro and micro threads of the thesis, demonstrating how both government instrumentalities and people on the ground worked together to meet better the settlement needs of postwar migrants and generally manage the wider community’s response to migrants. This thesis argues, then, that the postwar assimilationist period is best understood if we combine two methodological approaches to the sources: the top down approach, where policy is directed and imposed by the nation’s political leaders, and the bottom up approach, where policy is determined by needs at a local grass roots level. What this approach has revealed is the existence of a subtle

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<sup>4</sup> Ann-Mari Jordens, ‘Immigration since the Second World War,’ in Jupp, *The Australian People*, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Markus, ‘Labour and Immigration 1946-9: The Displaced Persons Program,’ *Labour History* 47 (November, 1984), 73.

<sup>6</sup> Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land. Australia’s Post War Immigration*, 2nd ed. (Leichhardt: Pluto Press, 1991), 23.

<sup>7</sup> Markus, ‘Labour and Immigration,’ 76.

<sup>8</sup> Sara Wills, ‘When Good Neighbours Become Good Friends: The Australian embrace of its millionth migrant,’ *Australian Historical Studies* 36 (October, 2004), 332-354.

dialogue between bureaucratic and grass roots elements that ultimately underpinned a process of postwar migrant re-settlement rather than dogmatic assimilation in postwar Australian society.

In the course of my reading of the literature and initial archival research I continually encountered fragments of the German migrant story. While many migrant groups feature in the postwar historiography, the German case offered some interesting peculiarities. Firstly I was struck by the German migrants' distinct absence from the secondary literature on the postwar migrant experience - surprising given the comprehensive historiography of Australia's early German settlers. Secondly there was the peculiar situation of West Germany, as a recent enemy, becoming a partner in one of the early bilateral assisted passage agreements negotiated by the Australian government in 1952. Thirdly, what was remarkable was the overt promotion of the easily assimilable German migrant, about whom there seems to have been a general consensus at the academic, bureaucratic, and community levels. For these reasons I decided to develop a German migrant case study, hypothesising that the government's vigorous adoption of German migration, the community's reception of these migrants, and their assumed proclivity for assimilation would all offer new evidence of what was actually happening during this period of postwar immigration.

As we will see, this hypothesis is borne out throughout the thesis with evidence repeatedly revealing the government's pragmatic approach to migrant settlement and assimilation. We see this particularly in the government's early efforts to recruit skilled German workers and broker an assisted passage agreement with the West German government in Chapter One; through the experiences of, and relationships fostered by, social workers employed by the Department of Immigration in Chapter Two; and through the involvement of the two Lutheran Churches in the immigration, reception and assimilation of migrants in Chapters Three and Four. While we encounter the German migrant situation at various points throughout the thesis – sometimes serving to inform the argument, sometimes to illustrate it – it is specifically in Part Two - or Chapters Three and Four - that we examine the microcosm of immigration and assimilation through the work of Australia's established Lutheran community in receiving and settling German migrants. Ultimately the micro focus of the German case study offers hard evidence of the reciprocal relationships forming between government, agency, community and individuals under the guise of Australia's postwar policy of migrant assimilation. Furthermore

the notion of German assimilability allows us to return to the larger thesis, questioning what it meant to assimilate and the implications of this for the people interpreting and implementing policy on the ground.

This thesis, then, combines both the macro and micro elements of postwar immigration and assimilation history. An examination of the correspondence files of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, the reports of its Social Welfare Section, the proceedings of the Australian Citizenship Conventions (ACC), and community and agency responses through the records of the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Good Neighbour Movement (GNM) reveals that negotiation and interpretation of policy occurred somewhere in between the official response and the grass roots implementation of migrant assimilation policy. At both ends of the hierarchy there existed a fluid and pragmatic conversation over the most socially and politically expedient ways to implement the loosely defined policy of assimilation. An unintended consequence of this pragmatic and flexible approach was the incremental shift in government and community attitudes that brought about the nation's progression from a monocultural society perceived along British lines to a multicultural society celebrating ethnic diversity. This process suggests a more nuanced reading of Australian postwar immigration history. In short then this thesis argues that postwar immigration was successful, that assimilation policy is more nuanced than previously understood, and that ultimately assimilation became the progenitor of multiculturalism.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review is divided into two parts. In the first section this literature review traces the development of immigration policy and how this has been understood in the historiography. Part two of the literature review addresses the historiography of German migration to Australia as it pertains to my postwar case study. The literature reveals a reliance on anecdotal rather than hard evidence to sustain claims of German assimilability and demonstrate how German migrants have settled in postwar Australia.

Much of the existing postwar immigration historiography mirrors shifts in Australian immigration policy. By and large the first sociological and historical works to emerge on Australia's postwar immigration program stress the xenophobic nature of Australian society, the dogmatic assimilationist approach of the government, and the relentless desire to retain a

white British monocultural society in the face of mass European immigration. These studies include the early work of James Jupp in *Arrivals and Departures* (1966), Jean Martin's *The Migrant Presence* (1978), Wilton and Bosworth's *Old Worlds and New Australia* (1985), and Lack and Templeton's *Bold Experiment* (1995).<sup>9</sup> Important as they are, these studies tend not to discuss the role of bureaucracy in providing (some) services to postwar migrants. They largely employ a top down approach to the period, arguing that the hardships experienced by postwar migrants settling in Australia were the result of uncompromising government policy initiatives. This thesis does not dispute the difficulties experienced by Australia's postwar migrant population. Their disadvantaged position in society is well documented and it is not my intention to rewrite the social history of migration in Australia. Rather, I argue that the dialogue between the government, public servants, agencies and individuals working in the field of migrant settlement and assimilation during the 1950s implicitly fostered social change.

In the past fifteen years secondary literature has emerged questioning this blanket condemnation of Australia's migrant assimilationist years. Ann-Mari Jordens provides the impetus for this in her pioneering work *Alien to Citizen* (1997) where she first hints at the historiographical shift taking place.<sup>10</sup> Jordens attributes this shift, in part, to the growing availability of archival sources from the period, of which she herself takes full advantage. Gwenda Tavan furthers this reappraisal in her PhD research on the demise of the White Australia Policy and her article on postwar assimilation, revealing the at times dichotomous nature of the government's assimilationist policy in regard to migrant settlement services.<sup>11</sup> Tavan and Jupp, in particular, argue that Australia's postwar influx of migrants was a precursor to the gradual liberalisation of immigration policy in the latter half of the twentieth century, specifically resulting in the dismantling of the White Australia Policy.<sup>12</sup> My thesis takes this argument one step further, demonstrating that the process of relaxing immigration

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<sup>9</sup> James Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures* (Melbourne: Cheshire-Lansdowne, 1966); Jean Martin, *Refugee Settlers: A study of Displaced Persons in Australia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1965); Jean Martin, *The Migrant Presence, Australian Responses, 1947-1977* (Hornsby: Allen and Unwin, 1978); Janice Wilton and Richard Bosworth, *Old Worlds and New Australia: The post-war migrant experience* (Victoria: Penguin Books, 1985); John Lack and Jacqueline Templeton, *Bold Experiment. A documentary history of Australian immigration since 1945* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995)

<sup>10</sup> Ann-Mari Jordens, *Alien to Citizen: Settling migrants in Australia, 1945-1975* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Gwenda Tavan, 'Good Neighbours: Community organisations, migrant assimilation and Australian society and culture, 1950-1961,' *Australian Historical Studies* 28 (October, 1997), 77-89.

<sup>12</sup> James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera: The story of Australian immigration* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Gwenda Tavan, *The Long Slow Death of White Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2005).

policy and tempering Australian attitudes began in the 1950s as bureaucrats, government agencies, communities and migrants negotiated the implementation of policy according to local needs. Jupp, in his later work in particular, acknowledges the groundwork laid by the postwar immigration years in developing Australia's 'ethnic communities'. Finally, Eric Richards contributes a thoroughly researched account of one hundred years of Australian immigration that affords the migrant centre stage in the story.<sup>13</sup> By and large then, the historiography of Australia's immigration program mirrors policy shifts between the 1950s to the present day. It evolves from studies measuring the assimilability of migrants, to a critique of the migrant and assimilationist experience, to recognition that migrants were irrevocably changing Australian society throughout the 1960s integrationalist years, and ultimately through to the multiculturalist years of equality, growth of ethnic organisations and services, and recognition of the migrant voice in Australian society.

The first studies to appear on Australia's postwar immigration program were not historical works, but sociological and demographic studies using the migrant assimilationist model. Sponsored in part by the Commonwealth Government through its relationship with the newly established Australian National University, scholars such as Charles A Price, WD Borrie, and Jean Martin engaged with the assimilationist debate in the Australian postwar migrant context.<sup>14</sup> Important in the context of this thesis, this relationship between the ANU researchers and the Commonwealth Government proved to be the foundation of a consultative process that Tavan argues did not appear until later in the 1960s with the arrival of 'quintessential public servant' Peter Heydon to the Department of Immigration.<sup>15</sup>

Demographer Charles A Price was perhaps the definitive authority on the general topic of Australian postwar immigration, with writings spanning some sixty years. His research on the

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<sup>13</sup> Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Charles Price, WD Borrie, Jean Martin and JJ Zubryzcki were all at one point employed at The Australian National University. Price worked in the area of Demography under Borrie from 1951 to 1978; Zubryzcki, a Polish migrant, joined the ANU in 1956 as a research fellow in sociology; and Martin obtained her doctorate from the ANU in 1954. See: Professor Ian Chubb AC, Vice-Chancellor, The Australian National University, 'Inaugural annual address on immigration and citizenship', 31 March 2010. Available online at <http://news.anu.edu.au/?p=2054>.

<sup>15</sup> Tavan, *Long Slow Death*, 129-130.

social implications of migration is still referenced today.<sup>16</sup> Much of his early work reflects the academic and social milieu of 1950s and 1960s Australia, during which time he published extensively on the theory and practice of migrant assimilation. Furthermore, in 1966 and 1971 Price published a comprehensive two-volume bibliography and digest of Australian immigration studies.<sup>17</sup> Price's work provides a solid historiographical foundation to the study of both Australia's postwar immigration program and the overarching ideological and policy shifts taking place. In his ground-breaking work on chain migration in *Southern Europeans in Australia* (1963), Price highlighted the importance of placing the migrant experience in its local context.<sup>18</sup> In 1969 Price further refined his work in a paper titled 'The Study of Assimilation'.<sup>19</sup> In attempting to measure the success of postwar migrant assimilation Price effectively identified and advocated a methodology for examining migrant settlement that was far removed from the totality of assimilationist rhetoric - not unlike what was transpiring at a practical level within the Australian community. Price argues that the migrant's ability to assimilate depends to some degree on the migrant's background, motives and expectations as well as the nature of the receiving society. Stressing the importance of the migrant's local context, Price outlines a number of sociological issues that need to be considered in addressing migrant assimilation. These include housing, employment, Australian societies and community groups, patterns of discrimination, and public education policy.<sup>20</sup> This was the first step in acknowledging that migrants were not blank canvases devoid of cultural and ethnic loyalties, to be assimilated easily into the existing culture. The migrants' experiences, their histories, and their cultural practices were important considerations in addressing their settlement into a new society. Price's methodology of localised studies of the migrant situation is discernible in his public involvement in the Commonwealth government's migrant assimilation policy through the publication of papers, conference proceedings and presence at the Australian Citizenship Conventions (ACCs).

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<sup>16</sup> For example see Richards, *Destination Australia*, 271, footnote 3, 312 and 342-343. For a comprehensive list of works by Price see, Graeme Hugo, ed., *Immigration, Settlement and Ethnicity in Post-war Australia: A selection of the writing of Charles A. Price* (Adelaide: The Australian Population Association, 2000), 178-184.

<sup>17</sup> See Charles Price, ed., *Australian Immigration: A bibliography and digest* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1966); Charles Price, ed., *Australian Immigration: A bibliography and digest No.2* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1971); Charles Price, 'The Study of Assimilation,' in JA Jackson, ed., *Migration 2*, Sociological Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 181-237.

<sup>18</sup> Charles A Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

<sup>19</sup> Price, 'The Study of Assimilation,' 181-237.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 181-237.

Another public intellectual contributing significantly to the postwar assimilationist debate was demographer WD Borrie. As noted by John Murphy in his study of 1950s Australian political culture, Borrie was unfairly chastised for his advocacy of assimilation after its discontinuation as a policy term. Murphy argues that as early as 1953 Borrie was writing about assimilation as a ‘two-way process – a merging between, not imposition upon’ migrants and Australian citizens.<sup>21</sup> Murphy defines Borrie’s assimilationist viewpoint as a ‘merging of new and old Australians’ which did not require that they become entirely alike, only that ‘there should not exist between them differences which will prevent immigrants from participating in the economic, social and cultural life of their country of adoption on a basis of equality.’<sup>22</sup> This is perhaps a very early indicator of the dissimilarity between migrant assimilation and what we understand to be the assimilation of Australia’s indigenous populations throughout the early twentieth century.<sup>23</sup>

Borrie’s depiction of assimilation is evident in his publication *Italians and Germans in Australia* (1954), one of the first postwar immigration studies to emerge from the ANU.<sup>24</sup> His work places the pre- and postwar migrant situation in an assimilationist context. His own rationale for the research, defended in part because of the short lapse of time since the inception of Australia’s postwar immigration program, was simply to ‘comment on the history of the assimilation process’ in Australia.<sup>25</sup> His work drew on Australia’s past German and Italian migrant experiences to comment on the assimilability of new postwar arrivals.<sup>26</sup> Borrie argued that in the case of the postwar German migrant community it was unlikely they would retain their cultural traits. He concluded that German migrants were likely to assimilate into Australian society.<sup>27</sup> However, in theorising on migrant assimilation in general, Borrie argued that total assimilation was not necessary in order to maintain a stable society:

Where there is no conflict on economic grounds, the cultural persistence of a minority which forms only a fraction of the total population is unlikely to be a cause of tension unless that minority’s country of origin pursues a political or international policy which is opposed to the interests of the receiving country.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: Private sentiment and political culture in Menzies’ Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2000), 154.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>23</sup> Anna Haebich, *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950-1970* (Fremantle: Fremantle Press, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> WD Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia: A study of assimilation* (Melbourne: FW Cheshire, 1954).

<sup>25</sup> Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia*, 230.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 228.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 230-231.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 219.



Borrie conducted his research and published the book during his time as Senior Research Fellow in Demography at the Australian National University.<sup>29</sup> Dating from 1954, and immersed in the machinations of Australia's mass immigration program, Borrie's early work at the ANU mirrors the genesis of Australia's pragmatic migrant settlement approach. Ultimately it was couched in, but somewhat removed, in practice, from the totality of assimilationist rhetoric.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, by 1956 Borrie's attendance at a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) international conference saw his views crystallise around the idea of migrant integration rather than assimilation.<sup>31</sup> His intellectual shift away from the term assimilation, influenced by events at home and on the international stage, was to impact on the Australian immigration program. Borrie's knowledge was conveyed through his role as a public intellectual and his contemporaneous actions in the field of Australian immigration. As will be seen at various points throughout the thesis, Borrie's attendance at ACCs and involvement with assimilationist bodies such as the Good Neighbour Movement (GNM) saw his views disseminated and discussed at both the government and community level.<sup>32</sup>

Jean Martin appeared on the public stage some time after the publication of Price's and Borrie's initial work in the field of migrant assimilation. Martin is widely acknowledged for her two seminal studies of the Australian postwar migrant experience. Her pioneering study, *Refugee Settlers* (1965), was published from her PhD research at the ANU.<sup>33</sup> It is a quantitative study in migrant assimilation, but more importantly it further illustrates the nature of postwar sociological and demographic research emanating from the ANU at this time. Martin's work draws on the sociological methodologies espoused by Price and Borrie, gathering first hand and personal contextual information about her DP subjects to study their

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<sup>29</sup> Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia*, 219. Borrie was appointed to the Chair of Demography at the ANU in 1957.

<sup>30</sup> As this thesis will demonstrate, Borrie's activities and writings are pertinent to the evolution of the Australian Government's assimilationist settlement policy during the 1950s. Chapter one in particular looks further at this consultative process, using examples of Borrie's involvement with the Department of Immigration and their assimilationist activities.

<sup>31</sup> Borrie published an account of the results of this conference in 1959. WD Borrie, *The cultural integration of immigrants: A survey based upon the papers and proceedings of the UNESCO Conference held in Havana, April 1956* (Paris: UNESCO, 1959).

<sup>32</sup> This body of more informal work is addressed throughout this thesis. It has been gathered together from archival research at the National Archives of Australia. Summaries of his presentations, or the papers themselves, have been located in the corresponding files of the various organisations he was addressing.

<sup>33</sup> Martin, *Refugee Settlers*.

progress towards assimilation. To this end Martin gained permission to spend six months living in a migrant hostel in 1953. Her sample of seventy-one individuals, surveyed in 1953 - with thirty-one of these followed up in 1962 - was used to ascertain the extent to which migrants were assimilating. Martin acknowledged the theoretical complexities of the concept of assimilation, defining it for her purposes as simply 'the process by which an individual immigrant adapts himself to life in a new society'.<sup>34</sup> Methodologically constructed to examine migrant assimilation, Martin's study in practice reveals the benefits accruing from a more personal understanding of the migrant situation. Through her early work, Martin effectively gave the migrant community a national voice for the first time since their arrival in Australia.

Martin's work demonstrates that assimilation or 'adaptation' could not be achieved in a matter of years and furthermore that migrant settlement policies needed to be long ranging and far sighted. As observed by Christine Inglis in her study on Australian race and ethnic relations, the result of Martin's body of work was 'to highlight the inappropriateness of government policy and its disjuncture with empirical reality; thereby contributing to the reconstruction of knowledge and the abandonment of assimilationist policy'.<sup>35</sup> Martin surveyed the DPs' employment and financial circumstances, their social relationships with Australians and other Europeans, and their attitudes towards Australia. Comparing their experiences over the course of nearly ten years, in 1953 and 1962, Martin reported a distinct shift in the attitudes and issues facing these migrants by the 1960s. Martin reasoned that their initial experiences

belonged to the period when these people were, above all, Displaced Persons and newcomers to this country. By 1962 most of them were mixing more with Australians and less, particularly at work, with Europeans.<sup>36</sup>

Acknowledging that migrant assimilation did not always progress evenly, Martin warns that migrants were likely to regress in their adaptation to a new society at certain times and that this regression was perhaps characteristic of the assimilation process.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Martin's research revealed the need to study the 'context in which immigrant adoption takes place as thoroughly as one studies the immigrants themselves', given that postwar Australia was not a

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<sup>34</sup> Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Christine Inglis, 'Race and ethnic relations in Australia: Theory, methods and substance,' in *Race, Ethnicity and Nation: International perspectives on social conflict*, ed. Peter Ratcliffe (London: UCL Press, 1994), 80.

<sup>36</sup> Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, 53.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, 100.

homogeneous society.<sup>38</sup> For example Martin writes that ‘an immigrant who goes to work on a Snowy Mountains construction job finds himself in a very different milieu from another who takes up residence in a small, “cliquey” country town’. Thus, she argues: ‘it is through the people and customs of his immediate environment that the pressures of the culture will bear upon him; by contact with them, he will evolve his own interpretation of “Australianism”.’<sup>39</sup> From her contact with DPs Martin draws a sympathetic but objective picture of Australia’s postwar migrant community. Furthermore, her study encapsulates the changing approach to migrant settlement policy by the 1960s, as demonstrated in the policy shift from assimilation to integration.

Through early attempts to measure the success of migrant assimilation in Australia, Martin, together with other public intellectuals such as Borrie and Price, laboured to define the assimilationist process. As will be seen throughout the thesis, this work was conducted not only through scholarly publications and contact with individual migrants, but also on the public stage as part of the Commonwealth Government’s program of wider community consultation with the Australian public. As will be seen later in the literature review, Martin’s subsequent work was influenced by her association with Borrie, Price and the ANU, and as shown by fellow academic JJ Zubryzcki, was instrumental in garnering political support for more liberalised immigration policy change during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>40</sup> This consultative process and relationship, encouraged by Peter Heydon during his term as Departmental Secretary in the 1960s, has been documented by Gwenda Tavan in *The Long Slow Death of White Australia* (2005). However, this thesis argues that the seeds of change and the foundations for broadening government and community thinking about immigration in general, and migrant settlement policy in particular, began a decade earlier, in the 1950s.

After gaining some critical distance from the immediate assimilationist years, the first broad immigration studies began to emerge. These included Jupp’s *Arrivals and Departures* (1966),

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<sup>38</sup> Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, 101.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 101.

<sup>40</sup> Zubryzcki recounts his and Martin’s relationship with Department of Immigration Secretary Peter Heydon in the 1960s: ‘Our conversations over a glass of sherry in Heydon’s office extending well past the official business hours, ranged widely over a number of issues which Heydon, more than any single public servant of his generation, identified as challenges of the next decade of Australia’s immigration experience.’ Jerzy Zubryzcki, ‘The Evolution of the Policy of Multiculturalism in Australia 1968-95,’ Proceedings of the 1995 Global Cultural Diversity Conference (Sydney: 26-28 April, 1995).

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/confer/>

Martin's *The Migrant Presence* (1978), Janis Wilton and Richard Bosworth's *Old Worlds and New Australia* (1985), Jock Collins' *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land* (1991) and John Lack and Jacqueline Templeton's *Bold Experiment* (1995). This body of scholarship reveals a strong negative attitude towards Australia's postwar assimilationist years, stressing the xenophobic nature of Australian society, the dogmatic assimilationist approach of the government, and the relentless desire to retain a British white monocultural society in the face of mass European immigration. Perhaps a product of emerging multicultural demands for equal rights and opportunities for migrants, these works impress on us the ineffectiveness and disempowerment of assimilation as a migrant settlement policy. This thesis will demonstrate that such accounts of the migrant experience are too partial and that the rhetoric of assimilation is too dogmatic for either approach to singularly inform our understanding of this period of postwar migrant settlement.

James Jupp, a postwar British migrant and currently esteemed political scientist of Australian immigration, published one of the first historical accounts of migrant settlement in Australia. As will be seen later in this literature review Jupp remains at the forefront of Australian immigration historiography. His first influential work in the field, *Arrivals and Departures* (1966), opens the debate over the practice of postwar migrant assimilation. In this early work Jupp draws on interviews to document the migrant experience in Australia, acknowledging some of the good settlement work performed by the Commonwealth Government throughout the assimilationist years. However, Jupp ultimately cites migrant dissatisfaction and large percentages of return British migration in the 1960s as evidence of the failure of assimilation.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Jean Martin's *The Migrant Presence, Australian Responses 1947-1977* (1978), documents the migrant settlement experience, focusing on the limitations of postwar migrant services. My thesis acknowledges the inadequacies of migrant services during the 1950s as at times ad hoc, under-resourced, and patronising attempts underpinned by assimilationist principles. However, as we will learn, a core of postwar settlement services rendered to migrants by the Department of Immigration and its network of assimilationist community organisations bears further examination. As we will see in Chapters One and Two these services, encouraged and at times provided by the Department of Immigration, deepen our understanding of what was taking place at this crucial time in Australia's immigration history.

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<sup>41</sup> Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*.

An early historical account of Australia's postwar immigration program was researched by historians Wilton and Bosworth. Their work *Old Worlds and New Australia* (1984) presents a bleak picture of the assimilationist years and a critical reading of the earlier academic research produced by social scientists such as Price, Borrie and Martin. Wilton and Bosworth acknowledge the close working relationship established between the Department of Immigration and these postwar academics, whose research they ultimately regard as conservative and ethnocentric.<sup>42</sup> Wilton and Bosworth highlight the preoccupation of Borrie and Price with assimilation in a wider attack on the postwar policy as it affected migrants.<sup>43</sup> In their timely study on disenfranchised postwar European migrants, Wilton and Bosworth articulated Australia's growing political and social need to recognise the diverse historical, cultural and ethnic backgrounds of these migrants during the multicultural era.

In *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land* (1988) Jock Collins documents the story of the 'migrant battler'.<sup>44</sup> Collins, a Marxist economist with a strong research interest in the socio-economics of immigration, reveals incidences of racial prejudice, and generational and cultural conflict in postwar migrant Australia. Collins' approach challenges the perception of immigration as a positive force in Australia's postwar recovery, painting the migrant community as largely marginalised and neglected. He is damning of the Australian Government's assimilationist years as the cause of this marginalisation. My thesis also acknowledges the hardships experienced by postwar migrants, but recognises too, the difficulties inherent in any migration program. My thesis will argue that of key importance to understanding the Commonwealth Government's assimilationist program, and hence the evolution of migrant service provision in Australia, is not the disempowerment of migrants but, rather, the development of a process of social and administrative collaboration.

Lack and Templeton are equally damning of the assimilationist years in their book *Bold Experiment: a documentary history of Australian Immigration since 1945* (1995). They define migrant assimilation as a one-way process that involved 'little more than learning English,

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<sup>42</sup> Wilton and Bosworth, *Old Worlds and New Australia*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> See also Bosworth and Wilton, 'A Lost History? The Study of European Migration to Australia,' *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 27 (1981), 222-224.

<sup>44</sup> Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands*.

getting a job, and abandoning an irrelevant past.<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, as noted by Jordens, Lack and Templeton did not draw on archival material for their book, instead opting to use publicly available documents such as speeches, Citizenship Convention Digests and other published materials, full of assimilationist rhetoric, to support their argument.<sup>46</sup> Their methodology and choice of documentary evidence leads Lack and Templeton to conclude that assimilation was a government propaganda tool that failed to address or meet the needs of migrants. They do not examine in any detail the migrant services provided by the Commonwealth Government, and specifically by the Department of Immigration. My thesis argues that despite obvious hardships suffered by migrants, assimilation was not simply a propaganda tool. The policy of migrant assimilation facilitated a period of government and community collaboration in an attempt to meet the needs of migrants and assist the wider Australian community in coming to terms with postwar change.

As mentioned above, recent immigration historiography has begun to question this critique of Australia's migrant assimilationist years. This reorientation began in the mid-1990s with Jordens' pioneering archival research into the efforts of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, resulting in the publication *Alien to Citizen* (1997).<sup>47</sup> In researching her book, Jordens gained unparalleled access to the files of the Department of Immigration at the National Archives of Australia. She comprehensively documents the activities of the department from 1945-1975, bringing to light some of the good work carried out in the field of migrant settlement by many of its public servants. She documents the provision of settlement services for migrants including social welfare, citizenship and language education, as well as the service providers' advocacy roles on behalf of migrants. Jordens' argument maintains that ultimately these services were inadequate and hence the migrants suffered accordingly. Jordens reveals a further shift in the historiography, outlining an unintended consequence of Australia's postwar European immigration program: the abolition of the White Australia Policy and the heralding of the multicultural state.<sup>48</sup>

The reappraisal of Australia's postwar immigration program as a forerunner to the abolition of the White Australia Policy is further documented by political scientist Gwenda Tavan in *The*

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<sup>45</sup> Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*, 77.

<sup>46</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 29-30.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 29-30.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, 248.

*Long Slow Death of White Australia* (2005).<sup>49</sup> Prior to this publication, based, as we have seen, on her PhD thesis, Tavan produced an article length study on the postwar assimilationist years. Her observations of the GNM and the ACCs highlight some of the ways in which the Australian Government catered to the needs of migrants in the postwar years.<sup>50</sup> Tavan argues, however, that the ‘cultural biases of the many middle-class participants in these organisations were also apparent in representations of assimilation and the “Australian Way of Life” that were sometimes insensitive to the immediate material concerns of migrants and irrelevant to working-class interests generally’; she concludes that this made them ineffective in delivering services to migrants.<sup>51</sup> She further argues that the government, along with assimilationist bodies such as the GNM, staunchly defended their cultural homogeneity until it became clear in the 1960s that Australian society was becoming culturally and ethnically mixed. As a result, Tavan argues, assimilation was a negative but necessary transitional doctrine to help facilitate the change from a monocultural to a multicultural Australian society. My thesis expands on the observations of Tavan, taking a more in-depth look at how and why this policy was transitional in nature. My thesis will demonstrate that the unique dialogue fostered by this ‘transitional doctrine’ actually contributed to an informed and integrated approach to meeting the needs of Australia’s postwar migrant community. It argues that despite the rhetoric of assimilation, in practice what occurred was an attempt to meet the settlement needs of migrants in what became a process more akin to an embryonic multiculturalism than to a strict historical reading of the term assimilation.

As mentioned above, Jupp continues to publish extensively in the field and his work is demonstrative of the continuing reappraisal of Australia’s postwar immigration history. Jupp’s body of work provides a comprehensive overview of Australia’s immigrant history as well as documenting shifts taking place in twentieth century immigration policy.<sup>52</sup> Since publishing *Arrivals and Departures* (1966), Jupp’s work has broadly covered immigration policy and the

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<sup>49</sup> Tavan, *Long Slow Death*. See also Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’.

<sup>50</sup> Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Some of Jupp’s major works include: James Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures; Ethnic Politics in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984); *Immigration* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1991); Garry P Freedman and James Jupp, eds., *Nations of Immigrants: Australia, the United States, and international migration* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992); James Jupp and Marie Kabala, eds., *The Politics of Australian Immigration* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993); *Understanding Australian Multiculturalism* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996); (ed) *The Australian People; White Australia to Woomera*; Andrew Markus, James Jupp and Peter McDonald, *Australia’s Immigration Revolution* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2009).

role of Government, international trends and relations, the migrant experience (in particular the British migrant experience), the emergence of ethnic communities, as well as the ideological evolution of Australia's immigration and settlement programs. In one of his more recent works, *From White Australia to Woomera* (2002), Jupp surveys thirty years of Australian immigration from 1972 to 2002, placing it in its historical and international context.<sup>53</sup> The study broadly surveys postwar immigration, highlighting the uniquely central role played by the state in engineering Australia's migrant intakes throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Jupp credits the period with establishing the groundwork 'for a variety of European ethnic organisations'.<sup>54</sup> He observes that the 'Displaced Persons intake laid the foundations for a multicultural Australia, even while official policy favoured rapid assimilation'.<sup>55</sup> Jupp further argues that postwar assisted passage agreements were 'a form of social engineering designed to keep Australia British, to increase the manual labour force, to redress the gender imbalance and to keep Australia white'.<sup>56</sup> My thesis argues that this social engineering was similarly crucial to Australia's post-1945 settlement policy of migrant assimilation.

The current state of Australian immigration historiography is encapsulated in the work of Eric Richards. Another widely respected scholar of Australian immigration, Richards has produced work spanning the nineteenth century highlands of Scotland, to English, Scottish and Welsh emigration, and finally to nineteenth and twentieth century Australian immigration.<sup>57</sup> His award winning account of twentieth century Australian immigration, *Destination Australia* (2008), surveys over one hundred years of Australian immigration history.<sup>58</sup> Drawing on a variety of sources, his book intertwines personal migrant stories with the broader Australian immigration narrative. Richards argues that 1947 saw a decisive shift in immigration policy, with the beginning of Arthur Calwell's 'Europeanisation' of Australian society. This was a turning point in Australia's move away from a monocultural British society. Richards

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<sup>53</sup> Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 28.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, 13.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, 18.

<sup>57</sup> See Richards, *Destination Australia; Britannia's children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004); Eric Richards and Jacqueline Templeton, eds., *The Australian immigrant in the 20th century: Searching neglected sources* (Canberra: Division of Historical Studies and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> Richards, *Destination Australia*. This work won the Community Relations Commission Award at the NSW Premier's Literary Award 2009.



documents this shift, ending with the abolition of the White Australia Policy, between 1966 and 1973, and the declaration of an Australian multicultural state. Arguing that this shift signifies the success of one hundred years of rapid change in Australian immigration, Richards reminds readers that the immigration experiment, ‘fraught with dangers to the social balance and general amity of Australian society, was achieved with extraordinary peaceability and little inter-communal aggravation’.<sup>59</sup> My thesis argues that this peaceful transition from a largely British monocultural to a multicultural society in the space of thirty-five years had its roots in the negotiation and implementation of 1950s assimilationist settlement policy happening at both the bureaucratic and grass roots levels. It does this by analysing the efforts and activities of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration towards migrant assimilation during the 1950s through the Australian Citizenship Conventions, the use of advisory bodies such as the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, and through the provision of social welfare and other settlement services to migrants. An analysis of these necessarily bureaucratic functions and provisions of basic services is balanced with an the examination of the more grass roots community assistance rendered to migrants through organisations such as the Good Neighbour Council of Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia. The interplay and national dialogue between these two seemingly disparate models of service delivery provide early evidence of the process Richards describes as leading to the ‘extraordinary peaceability’ of Australia’s transition to multiculturalism. My thesis expands on this transition by examining the nuanced dialogue of 1950s Australian assimilation.

### **German migration**

In order to provide grass roots examples and hard evidence of postwar assimilation and provision of migrant services in the Australian community, my initial research led me to examine the experience of Australia’s German migrant community. In particular I have compiled a 10 year demographic snapshot of the community and looked closely at how one of its most identifiable institutions, the Lutheran Church, responded to both the migrant presence and the government’s postwar policy of assimilation.<sup>60</sup> There are many general works addressing Australia’s German migrant history; however the immediate post-1945 period is generally ignored by historians and sociologists in favour of observations on earlier nineteenth

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<sup>59</sup> Richards, *Destination Australia*, 211.

<sup>60</sup> See Appendix 1: ‘Postwar Migration Trends: A demographic snapshot of the South Australian German migrant community’ for a discussion of the data produced from the 10 year demographic snapshot.

century arrivals. My thesis will show that experiences and circumstances particular to postwar German migrants help us to understand the political and social realities of Australia's postwar assimilationist program. It is indicative of the German migrant literature in general that most monographs to emerge in the last fifty years focus primarily on the nineteenth and early twentieth century German migrant communities, devoting only a chapter or two to post-1945 waves of German migration. Largely a product of the multicultural era, these studies centre on retention of cultural traits, language maintenance, ethnic club survival, and the foreign language press as sustained by present-day German migrant communities. They reference the successful assimilation of German migrants without defining what this meant. To differing degrees such studies all disregard the importance of the formative postwar years of settling migrants in Australia for both the German migrant community and for the wider Australian community as a whole.<sup>61</sup> There exist a few specialised studies, reviewed here, addressing specific aspects of postwar German migration which help us better to understand this migrant community and its ability to 'assimilate'. These studies look at language retention, migrant stereotypes, public opinion, and specialised migrant recruitment schemes. They are useful for what they tell us of the government's motivations, the assimilation process and the migrant experience.

Many of the general studies are, by design, narrowly focused. Where they do contribute more broadly to the historiography of Australian postwar immigration these studies tend towards a top down methodology highlighting the negative aspects of the government's assimilation policy. If we recall that this thesis maintains the inadequacies of any one methodological approach then it is here, in the detail of the German migrant case study that we begin to gain a better informed and more specific understanding of what was transpiring at this time. In Chapters Three and Four specifically, through an in-depth case study of two established Australian religious organisations with overt German ancestry, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia, we will see the day to day negotiations and practicalities of the assimilation program play out at the

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<sup>61</sup> See for example: Jürgen Tampke and Colin Doxford, *Australia Willkommen: A history of the Germans in Australia* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1990); Josef Vondra, *German Speaking Settlers in Australia* (Melbourne: Cavalier Press, 1981); Hugo, *Immigration, Settlement and Ethnicity*; Ian Harmstorf, *The German Experience of Australia, 1833-1938* (Adelaide: The Australian Association of von Humboldt Fellows, Flinders University of South Australia, 1988); Ian Harmstorf and Michael Cigler, *The Germans in Australia* (Melbourne: AE Press, 1985); Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands*.

administrative, community and individual levels.<sup>62</sup> The role of these two Lutheran churches is of particular significance to Australia's postwar assimilation story given Australian Lutheranism's distinct German heritage and the churches' established (but somewhat precarious) position in postwar Australian society. As we will see, after 1945 migrant congregations were founded across both Lutheran synods to cater to new arrivals and grass roots assistance grew organically amongst the Australian Lutheran community. However, to date the history of the churches' work with migrants and the proliferation of ethnic congregations has not been placed in any broader historiographical context. To this end, this thesis will show that the response of Australia's Lutheran community to the arrival of postwar migrants affords us a concrete example of the relationships developing between commonwealth, state and community bodies as a result of government initiatives towards assimilation. This case study, then, enables us to tease out some of the more pragmatic and nuanced machinations of postwar migrant settlement policy in the microcosm of Australia's established Lutheran community.

To further appreciate the pertinence of the German migrant case study we must first acknowledge Australia's long history of German immigration and settlement. While German migration to Australia from the 1830s until the First World War has stimulated much historical inquiry, the mid-twentieth century has received much less attention. The work of historian Ian Harmstorf covering the nineteenth century is comprehensive.<sup>63</sup> A German migrant himself, and heavily involved with the South Australian German community, Harmstorf's publications include two major monographs surveying the German migrant presence in Australia from the nineteenth century.<sup>64</sup> Hamstorf and Michael Cigler briefly survey the wartime and post-1945 communities, making reference to continuities and parallels between Australia's early German settlers and the post-1945 arrivals in the final chapter. However, they largely overlook the immediate post-1945 period in favour of more recent migrant experiences. The original research I have conducted into the experiences of Australia's postwar German migrant

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<sup>62</sup> During the 1800s the Lutheran Church in Australia was characterised by a multitude of semi-independent synods. By the early twentieth century, two distinct rival synods had emerged nationally, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA, known until 1944 as ELSA, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA). This state of affairs remained until the two Synods amalgamated into one Lutheran Church of Australia in 1966. Everard Leske, *For Faith and Freedom: The story of Lutherans and Lutheranism in Australia 1838-1996* (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1996).

<sup>63</sup> See for example Ian Harmstorf, 'Guests or fellow countrymen: A study in assimilation, an aspect of the German community in South Australia, 1836-1918,' PhD thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1987; Harmstorf, *The German Experience of Australia*. See Bibliography for a more comprehensive list of works.

<sup>64</sup> Harmstorf and Cigler, *The Germans in Australia*. Harmstorf, *The German Experience of Australia*.

community adds to the growing body of literature on the postwar German migrant community while more significantly contributing to my broader thesis.

The historiography of Australia's German migrant experience during the First World War is comprehensive. During the interwar years internment and discrimination resulted in the gradual diminution of an identifiable German community in Australia.<sup>65</sup> As we will see in Chapters Three and Four, an understanding of this treatment and the general anti-German hysteria that ensued helps us to locate the Lutheran Churches' position and responses to migrants in the postwar period. In a handful of works reaching beyond 1939 historians such as Harmstorf, John Perkins, Lois Foster and Anne Seitz, and Peter Monteath document the harsh treatment of Australia's German communities during the Second World War, the political intrigues of the Nazi Party in Australia, the perceived disloyalty and internment of German settlers, the ensuing wartime anti-German hysteria, and the experience of German refugees from Nazism in Australia.<sup>66</sup> As we will see in Chapter Three especially, this history affected the existing German-Australian community's ability, including that of the Lutherans, to receive and support migrants in the immediate postwar years.

In 1947 prominent German-Australian parliamentarian H Homburg, who had himself suffered wartime internment in South Australia, issued a timely reminder of the hurdles Australia would face in settling European migrants. Incited by Charles A Price's accusations of disloyalty in *German Settlers* (1945), Homburg issued a response by way of self-publication in

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<sup>65</sup> In conversation Ian Harmstorf indicated to me that South Australia's German community were, and still are, not willing to talk about their inter-war experiences. He reasoned that the experience of the First World War, coupled with the onslaught of the Second World War and the ensuing Nazi atrocities, were the cause of such reluctance. According to Harmstorf, anecdotal evidence suggests that much family documentary evidence of this period was destroyed in an attempt first to avoid scrutiny by the security services, and then to minimise any future discrimination against these families or business because of their German heritage.

<sup>66</sup> See for example: Ian Harmstorf, 'South Australian Germans in World War Two,' *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* 16 (1988), 22-29; Lois Foster and Anne Seitz, 'Official attitudes to Germans during World War II: Some Australian and Canadian comparisons,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 14 (October, 1991), 489; Guna Kinne, 'Germans in Australia, 1932-45: Nazi stratagems and official opinions,' Honours thesis, University of Adelaide, 1976; John Perkins, 'Germany Calling: Nazi Short Wave Broadcasting to Australia in the 1930s,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 42 (September, 1994); John Perkins, 'The Party was not without its intrigues: The struggle for control of Hitler's NSDAP in Australia,' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 82 (June, 1996); Peter Monteath, ed., *Germans: Travellers, settlers and their descendants in South Australia* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2011).

*South Australian Lutherans and Wartime Rumours* (1947).<sup>67</sup> Homburg documented the degrees of acceptance and discrimination encountered by the German community in South Australia in particular, arguing for its demonstrated assimilation into the mainstream culture. Homburg concluded, on the eve of Australia's Displaced Persons scheme, that South Australia had failed dismally in its treatment of refugees. Projecting on a national scale, Homburg quoted noted Australian scientist and public commentator, Professor Clunies Ross: 'If I were a refugee in Australia, I would not want to bring my relatives here after the war. Australia has not yet learned how to absorb refugees and accept them as citizens. It still regards them as outsiders and interlopers.'<sup>68</sup> On the eve of the arrival of the first Displaced Persons in Australia, Homburg's experiences and the observations of Clunies Ross were timely reminders that the greatest critic of the government's mass-immigration scheme would be the Australian public.

Two studies focus specifically on Australian public opinion towards German migration. Gisela Kaplan and Jan Schmorte both conclude that Germans were deemed desirable postwar migrants surprisingly soon after the Second World War.<sup>69</sup> Kaplan writes of the Holocaust, that it 'had no measurable effect on the popularity of Germans as migrants'.<sup>70</sup> Both authors reveal the role of the Australian press in the forming of public opinion, highlighting the nuanced and at times dichotomous nature of immigration and assimilationist policy. Shifts in media coverage and public opinion from initial hostility, to ambivalence, to enthusiasm for German migration sit in stark contrast to individual migrant experiences where, as highlighted by Borrie, many Germans were subjected to anti-Nazi taunts on arrival in Australia.<sup>71</sup> Still, as we

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<sup>67</sup> Charles A Price, *German Settlers in South Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1945); H Homburg, *South Australian Lutherans and Wartime Rumours* (Adelaide, Self published, 1947). In his 1945 publication Price charged the wartime German community with disloyalty towards their adopted country. Homburg retaliated with a chronological survey of the press, public lectures, Lutheran Church activities, parliamentary debates, the security service, and internment of German Lutherans to disprove and quell accusations of disloyalty. Homburg made a case for the assimilation of German settlers into mainstream Australian society and culture.

<sup>68</sup> Homburg, *South Australian Lutherans*, 56.

<sup>69</sup> Gisela Kaplan, 'Australian Public Opinion of Germans and Germany in the Australian Print Media 1945-1956,' in *German-Australian Cultural Relations Since 1945: Proceedings of the conference held at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, from September 20-23, 1994*, ed. Manfred Jurgensen (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), 78-100. Jan Schmorte, 'Attitudes towards German immigration in South Australia in the post-Second World War Period, 1947-60,' *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 51 (December, 2005), 530-544. See also Jan Schmorte, 'Attitudes towards German immigration in South Australia in the post-Second World War Period, 1947-60', MA thesis, Flinders University, 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Kaplan, 'Australian Public Opinion,' 98.

<sup>71</sup> Borrie, *Italians and Germans*, 21.

will see throughout this thesis, the experience of German and, indeed, all European postwar migrants was often at odds with official rhetoric.

The disadvantaged position of the earliest postwar German migrants, including specifically recruited scientists and tradesmen, reminds us of the peculiarity of the German migrant case. Uta von Homeyer and Siobhan McHugh have both produced studies revealing some lesser known aspects of the lives of these men whose collective experience, we will see, offers evidence of the beginnings of a collaborative approach to postwar migrant assimilation and settlement by government, agency and individuals. Homeyer's 1995 Masters Thesis on the 'Employment of Scientific and Technical Enemy Aliens' (ESTEAs) Scheme in Australia reveals that through this scheme the Australian Government contributed to the postwar German 'brain drain' phenomenon by recruiting German scientists to work in Australia between 1947 and 1952.<sup>72</sup> Siobhan McHugh similarly documents one of Australia's largest national postwar work programs in *The Snowy: The people behind the power* (1995) under which European migrants, including ESTEAs and Special Project Germans, were recruited.<sup>73</sup> Both studies remind us that the migrant experience was not necessarily a happy or easy one. Broadly McHugh's study reveals an unprecedented concentration of migrants and Australians living and working together essentially in a multicultural paradigm. Similarly it reveals in further detail the small group of disadvantaged German migrants, predominantly men, who arrived in Australia prior to the commencement of the West German Assisted Passage Scheme in 1952.<sup>74</sup> My thesis places the experiences of these disadvantaged German migrants within the wider context of Australia's immigration and assimilation program. It specifically reveals, in Chapter Two, an important example of the advocacy role played by the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section on behalf of migrants during the early years of the immigration program, thereby contributing to our understanding of how assimilation policy fostered an administrative and social dialogue that helped to identify and cater for this small but important group of German migrants in particular, and served more generally as a model for all postwar migrants.

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<sup>72</sup> Uta von Homeyer, 'The Recruitment, Deployment and Experiences of German Scientists in the Post World War Two Period: An historical evaluation,' MA thesis, School of Social Sciences, Flinders University, 1995.

<sup>73</sup> Siobhan McHugh, *The Snowy: The people behind the power* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1995)

<sup>74</sup> A similar scheme, known as the Special Projects Scheme, was also instigated by the Australian Government to recruit specific German migrants for employment in Australian industry before an organised assisted passage agreement was formalised. Further details of this scheme can be found in Chapter Two and Appendix 1.

Looking more broadly at the German migrant community there are a handful of studies affording us detail on this community's postwar experiences. Tampke and Doxford in particular remind us that the migrant experience was at best difficult in their survey of Australia's German migrant community throughout the twentieth century. A chapter on the post-1945 period broadly situates the German migrant experience within an assimilationist framework and reasons that after an initial period of settling in, German migrants assimilated into the existing society, as evidenced by the fact that 'they usually bought or built their own home'.<sup>75</sup> Ingrid Muenstermann, who we will review later in the chapter, similarly offers evidence of the German migrants' ability to settle in postwar Australia. Muenstermann cites official statistics on employment, education and training, income, home ownership, high rates of out-marriage and naturalisation, and a definite language shift from German to English in first generation migrants as evidence of their successful 'transition into a new culture'.<sup>76</sup> Examples such as this give us some clue as to the real meaning of German assimilability. As we will see throughout the thesis, in practice the assimilationist ideal was tightly bound to pragmatic re-settlement services and civic, economic and social engagement with the host society rather than any hard and fast notions of complete assimilation into the existing culture.

Language retention is of course an example of this pragmatic approach to assimilation, as well as being indicative of the survival and growth of ethnic communities within postwar Australia. In the case of German migrants, language retention provides one example of the ways in which assimilationist policy responded to the needs of the postwar migrant community. Scholars such as Alan Corkhill, Miriam Gilson, JJ Zubrzycki and Michael Clyne have all examined the maintenance of the German language and its associated press in postwar Australia. Corkhill surveys the German language press in a chapter length study of a press reborn after two world wars and evolving to meet the needs of newly arriving German-speaking migrants after 1945. He reveals that while the total number of German language papers grew after the signing of the West German Assisted Passage migration agreement in 1952, generally the German language press had to reinvent itself to cater for Displaced Persons and other German-speaking migrants in the postwar years.<sup>77</sup> It was this reinvention,

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<sup>75</sup> Tampke and Doxford, *Australia Willkommen*, 248.

<sup>76</sup> Ingrid Muenstermann, 'Joining the club: German immigrants to South Australia after 1945,' in Monteath, *Germans: Travellers, settlers and their descendants*, 418.

<sup>77</sup> Alan Corkhill, 'The German Language Press in Australia and the Mechanics of Survival,' in Jurgensen *German-Australian Cultural Relations*, 310-311.

argues Corkhill, which led to its survival. Corkhill acknowledges the earlier work of Gilson and Zubrzycki in *The Foreign-Language Press in Australia, 1848-1964* (1967), but refutes their conclusion that the ethnic press would die out after fulfilling its role of social, cultural and economic integration of the migrant population.<sup>78</sup> Similarly linguist Michael Clyne looks at German language retention in his 1964 PhD thesis, revealing that, generally, postwar German migrants placed a low priority on maintaining the German language.<sup>79</sup> However, the persistence of the German language press in Australia, as demonstrated by Corkhill and as seen in Chapters One and Three of this thesis, suggests that language retention did in fact occur. As my thesis demonstrates, the use of the English language by migrants was symptomatic of the pragmatic approach to migrant assimilation and settlement in the 1950s and did not presuppose the loss of the German language. Furthermore, as we will see throughout this thesis, rather than assimilation necessitating its demise, the postwar influx of European migrants resulted in a surge in the use of the German language. This occurred not only amongst migrant communities but also Australian service providers and the Australian Lutheran community in particular, reinforcing the period's less than dogmatic approach to migrant assimilation.

Two major unpublished works, and the subsequent work of Ingrid Muenstermann in particular, round out our knowledge of the German migrant experience in postwar Australia. In their unpublished theses Lynne Carmichael and Muenstermann offer a more in-depth, even personal look at the people, the community and the issues surrounding German migration in postwar Australia.<sup>80</sup> Both Carmichael's 1972 Advanced Diploma of Education Masters thesis, 'Past and Present German Migration' and Muenstermann's 1997 PhD thesis in sociology, 'German Immigrants in South Australia after 1945' examine theories of migrant assimilation, integration and acculturation to best explain the successful settlement of German migrants in postwar Australia.<sup>81</sup> Muenstermann in particular has researched the emergence of postwar

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<sup>78</sup> Corkhill, 'German Language Press'. See also Miriam Gilson, Jerzy Zubrzycki, *The Foreign-Language Press in Australia, 1848-1964* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1967).

<sup>79</sup> Michael G Clyne, 'Some Observations on the Language Assimilation of German Speaking Post-War Migrants in Australia,' PhD thesis, Monash University, 1965.

<sup>80</sup> Lynne Carmichael, 'Past and Present German Migration. A comparison of two major periods of German migration to South Australia (1836-1900 and 1947-1971) with special reference to secondary school age children of German migrants,' Advanced Diploma of Teaching, Torrens College of Advanced Education, Adelaide, 1972; Ingrid KR Muenstermann, 'German Immigrants in South Australia after 1945,' PhD thesis, Flinders University, 1997.

<sup>81</sup> Carmichael concludes that German culture had moved closer to that of the host society and that there was, therefore, less psychological need for German immigrants to retain their language and culture once in Australia.



German associations in Australia and produced further work on the acculturation, rather than assimilation, of German migrants. She argues that Germans have a long history of ‘trying to fit in’ and that in Australia postwar German migrants found little need for ‘German’ clubs and associations beyond the initial settlement years and have subsequently become ‘highly acculturated’.<sup>82</sup> My thesis is not concerned specifically with measuring the assimilation (or acculturation) of migrants but more with understanding what assimilation meant in the context of Australia’s postwar immigration program. Still, if we take the collected findings of Muenstermann and Carmichael, along with those of Borrie, Homburg, Harmstorf and Cigler, and Tampke and Doxford, to show that postwar German migrants would or did successfully assimilate, then the German case study situated within this thesis can further deepen our understanding of not only what was actually happening at this crucial point in Australia’s immigration history but what was meant in practice by the term migrant assimilation.

### **The Migrant Database**

My thesis draws on the experiences of postwar German migrants to illustrate more broadly the processes that developed out of the government’s desire to ‘assimilate’ migrants. There was scant evidence of this migrant group as a whole, and for this reason it was necessary to develop a general understanding of who these migrants were before reflecting in further detail on their experiences. To this end I compiled a database (herein referred to as the ‘Migrant Database’) of 2,216 German arrivals to South Australia during the period 1947 to 1961.<sup>83</sup> This sample comprises 14.9 per cent of the state’s total German born intake, and 2 per cent of the national intake.<sup>84</sup> The Migrant Database, along with the existing literature, allows us in part to better understand this migrant group as we get to know them throughout the thesis. Ultimately

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She also concludes that evidence of family migration, influence of the church and trends towards urban settlement all point to a continuation of nineteenth century German migratory trends. Muenstermann employs a more rigorous sociological framework to the sources, concluding that the first generation of postwar German migrants had become acculturated and that this, coupled with a high rate of out-marriage, produced second and third generations who had become integrated and were hence a step closer to assimilation.

<sup>82</sup> Muenstermann, ‘Joining the Club,’ 430-432.

<sup>83</sup> See Appendix 1 for an in-depth discussion of the data.

<sup>84</sup> In 1947 there were 1,098 German born residents living in South Australia and by 1961 there were 16,010 such residents living in South Australia. Therefore the net intake between 1947 and 1961 was 14,912 German born migrants to South Australia. The database represents 2,216 of these migrants, or 14.8 per cent. For the intake of German born migrants to Australia as a whole during this time period, my database is representative of just over 2 per cent of the entire German born population in Australia. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947 and 1961. Census Bulletin no. 12, Summary for the State of South Australia* (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1947), 7; *Census Bulletin no. 11, Summary for the State of South Australia* (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1961), 6.

this thesis draws on the German migrant experience through a case study within an existing community organisation with an overt German heritage, Australian Lutheranism through its two church bodies, to examine this period of assimilation in the microcosm as it affected both the migrant and the host society.

The findings of the Migrant Database are largely presented in a discussion paper included as an appendix to this thesis. Appendix 1 is a quantitative micro study in historical demography of a very particular, local migrant community that at times employs qualitative tools to enable it to speak to the wider thesis. The discussion paper provides hard evidence of the German migrant community, the question of whose assimilation illustrates how both a macro and micro approach to the sources inform each other to best ultimately explain this period of immigration history. It is because of the methodological tussles between the approaches to history and demography, and the already complex macro and micro analysis of the sources throughout the thesis, that this discussion is best located as an appendix to the main argument. It validates the German migrant case study, given the paucity of data and hard evidence we have about this community as a whole, while its quantitative methodology supports the hypotheses of the main thesis without distracting from the broader argument.

Broadly speaking, the Migrant Database substantiates and builds on what we already know of Australia's postwar German migrant community: while small numbers of German migrants settled in Australia after 1947 with the beginning of the DP and small targeted work schemes, the introduction of a bilateral assisted passage agreement in 1952 resulted in the largest net gains for the postwar Australian German community. The assisted passage scheme in particular is credited with reinvigorating a flagging community that had been in steady decline up until 1947.<sup>85</sup> What the Migrant Database confirms at the local level is that the assisted passage agreement similarly supplied the greatest proportion of German migrants to South Australia between 1953 and 1965 along with numerically smaller, but demographically significant, numbers of specifically recruited or sponsored migrants.<sup>86</sup> The overwhelming majority of these migrants were German-born, with the data suggesting a small percentage of

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<sup>85</sup> See Tampke and Doxford, *Australia Willkommen*, 248; Carmichael, 'Past and Present Migration,' 107, Muenstermann, 'German Immigrants,' 58, 76-78; Gisela Kaplan, 'Post-war German Immigration,' in Jupp, *The Australian People*, 498.

<sup>86</sup> Between 1951 and 1962, 84 per cent of all German-born arrivals in Australia were assisted migrants. Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 42. See also Figure 9, Appendix 1.11; and Appendix 1.5 and 1.6 for discussion on gender and age structure of the South Australian German migrant community.

ethnic Germans amongst them. From 1953 the assisted passage scheme largely rectified a pronounced early gender imbalance in the postwar German migrant community, and this was closely monitored by the Australian government.<sup>87</sup> This view corroborates Jupp's depiction of postwar assisted passage migration as a form of government orchestrated and managed social engineering.<sup>88</sup> The database similarly tells us that the assisted passage agreement largely favoured family migration and that small numbers of widows subsequently migrated to Australia, sponsored by their migrant children already established in the Australian community. The database supports figures suggesting the postwar German community was demographically rather young, and we also know that postwar German migrants were predominantly attracted to settle in South Australia by employment opportunities.<sup>89</sup> The overwhelming majority of these Germans, be they families, widows or young single migrants, intended to settle permanently in Australia. Ultimately, then, we can infer from the South Australian case study that this postwar German migrant community had every reason to invest themselves civically, economically and socially in their new society – a process made easier, as we will see, through the provision of reception and settlement services within government instrumentalities and the local Australian community under the guise of migrant assimilation.

### **The Sources**

This thesis has drawn almost exclusively on archival materials held in the National Archives of Australia, particularly its Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra offices. Other archival sources consulted include holdings of the Lutheran Archives of Australia, the National Library of Australia, the Mortlock Library, State Library of South Australia, and the Special Collections of the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide.

My research began at the National Archives of Australia's Adelaide office where conversations around the postwar German migrant experience with Assistant Director Enid Woodley produced nineteen archival boxes of 'Alien Registration Documents' from series D4878, Consignment 3. These boxes housed the RA2 arrival forms of some 2,216 German

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<sup>87</sup> See Appendix 1.9 for discussion on intended length of stay.

<sup>88</sup> Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, 18.

<sup>89</sup> The Migrant Database suggests that the German migrant community was demographically younger than its Italian and British counterparts. The median age at the 1947 and 1961 census years respectively were – UK born: 52, 46; Italian born: 43, 32; Netherlands born: 44, 27; Australian born: 28, 27; German born: 53, 27. Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 31.

migrants residing in South Australia between the years 1945 to 1965.<sup>90</sup> As we have seen, from these forms I collected the personal particulars of 2,216 German migrants, creating a unique database that recorded details such as: name, date of birth, nationality, sex, marital status, hair and eye colour, visa number, passport number, present address, and occupation of each migrant. Compiled into a Microsoft Access database, this early research placed at my fingertips a wealth of information on South Australia's postwar German migrant arrivals. I have used this data to outline the schemes under which postwar German migrants emigrated to Australia, as well as to provide a demographic snapshot of the German migrant community in South Australia. Appendix 1 provides a discussion of the findings of the Migrant Database which are used throughout the thesis to provide hard evidence of the German migrant demographic and prepare the ground for the German case study in Chapters Three and Four. The database provides empirical evidence with which to analyse the German migrant experience more broadly against the Australian government's policy of migrant settlement and assimilation. As previously stated, an analysis of this evidence and an initial survey of Department of Immigration records held at the Canberra office of the National Archives of Australia raised many important questions about the process of postwar migration and settlement in Australia and prompted further research at both the National Archives of Australia and the Lutheran Archives of Australia. These early inquiries contributed to the realisation that the largely bureaucratic and official records of the Department of Immigration or individual community and migrant experiences alone could not produce a balanced understanding of Australia's postwar assimilationist period.

In researching this thesis, of the hundreds of files I have examined at the National Archives of Australia, nearly fifty per cent previously had an archival status of 'closed' and were only 'opened' at my request. Consequently, almost half the primary source material I have examined at the National Archives alone had been previously unseen by any other researcher.<sup>91</sup> These 'closed' archival files included Department of Labour and National Service files on migrant hostels in South Australia and Tasmania (numbering over twenty),

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<sup>90</sup> NAA: D4878, Alien Registration Documents; Consignment 3: Nationality, German; nineteen boxes. See Appendix 4.1 for an example of the RA2 form.

<sup>91</sup> The only exception to this is Ann-Mari Jordens who in the early 1990s had unlimited access to all NAA files regardless of their archival status for her book *Alien to Citizen*, researched and jointly published with the NAA in 1996. As will be seen in Chapters One and Two, this thesis addresses the evidence in the context of the Government's assimilationist settlement policies, revealing the nuanced nature of the migrant settlement and assimilation processes.

social workers' reports for various State migrant camps and hostels, as well as individual case files created by the Department of Immigration and relating to ethnic German migrants as discussed at length in Chapter Four. Other National Archives files consulted include negotiations between the Commonwealth Government and the Federal Republic of Germany to broker a bilateral migration agreement, Department of Immigration correspondence with the Australian Mission in Western Germany over the desirability of German migrants, negotiations and selection and recruitment procedures for German tradesmen under the Special Project migration scheme, and more broadly, files of the ACCs, the GNM, and the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (CIAC). Whole series of Department of Immigration correspondence and general files between 1945 and 1965 have been consulted, as have dozens of reports filed by social workers attached to the Department of Immigration for the purpose of working with migrants in the field of assimilation and settlement.

To balance what would otherwise have been a top heavy approach to the sources, I examined sources at an agency level in both the Lutheran Archives of Australia and the State Library of South Australia's holdings on the GNM. Much of the archival material I accessed at the Lutheran Archives of Australia was uncatalogued and thus hitherto largely overlooked by historians. When I first approached Lutheran archivist Lyall Kupke, he was unsure where to begin looking for material on postwar German migrants. My research at the Lutheran Archives consisted mainly of trawling through correspondence, documents and clippings which had been loosely grouped into 'miscellaneous correspondence' and 'immigration' files and boxes that had been deposited with the Archives once, it would appear, they were deemed closed by the church office bearers responsible for them. These files, along with official church publications and periodicals provide a rich source of internal and external correspondence and documentation of Australian Lutheranism's reception and settlement of postwar migrants, including Germans.

### **The Thesis**

Chapter One argues that the actions of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration were crucial to the success of the postwar immigration program and to the successful settlement of European migrants. As part of a wider push to manage and socially engineer Australian immigration, the Department provided the scaffolding necessary to ensure that the nation's social experiment in settling over one million migrants proceeded as smoothly as possible. To

this end the Department utilised all existing avenues of government, business, community, and voluntary organisations at both the national and local levels, as well as creating new avenues of support such as its Social Welfare Section and the GNM. Chapter One also addresses the Government's specific attention to the question of German migration and the attendant publicity and management of such a program. Ultimately, Chapter One reveals that the department's actions towards migrant assimilation, settlement and the promotion of Australian citizenship laid the foundations of a growing national dialogue and relationship between government, agency, community (and eventually migrant groups) that encouraged the liberalisation of immigration policy as witnessed in the shift away from assimilation and 'White Australia' towards a more inclusive program of immigration by century's end.

In Chapter Two we will see the establishment of a Social Welfare Section of the Department of Immigration in 1949, staffed by professional social workers, that was instrumental in the successful settlement of postwar migrants during the 1950s. The social workers' monthly and annual reports demonstrate that they were uniquely placed to recognise and deal with the practical and social problems experienced by migrants on arrival in Australia. They were similarly well placed, as government employees at the national, state and local levels, to feed their growing knowledge and experience of migrant settlement issues back to the government. What becomes evident from the Department of Immigration's provision of this basic social service to migrants is the resulting pattern of social and administrative collaboration, the establishment of which ultimately led to more effective services for migrants across the country. The Section's work in regional areas was particularly important to the settlement of migrants, as were their efforts to facilitate grass roots movements such as the GNM to further sustain practical assistance to migrants. These reports highlight rather early in the immigration program the experiences of German migrants in particular, identifying especially those settled in rural areas. Many of these early experiences with German migrant arrivals aided the social workers' understanding of the migration and settlement process and, as we will see, assisted them in early identification of the problems inherent to the migration process.

Chapter Three complements the macro view of Australian immigration and assimilation presented in Part One of the thesis by refocusing more specifically on a micro study of the two Lutheran Churches of Australia, with specific regard to German migration. Part one of a two-part case study, Chapter Three examines the general efforts of Australian Lutheranism towards

postwar immigration, migrant assimilation and settlement. While Chapters One and Two revealed that the actions of the Department of Immigration were integral to the successful administration of postwar migrant settlement, Chapters Three and Four illustrate how existing community organisations such as the two Lutheran Churches also contributed to this social experiment. The activities of both Lutheran Synods show a church that used official assimilationist channels to help identify and meet its migrant congregations' needs. Their actions concerning postwar migrants and the policy of assimilation are demonstrative of the complex relationships forming during this period: that is, the collaborative efforts of bureaucracy and grass roots assistance towards migrant settlement. Chapter Three also argues that while at the local level the church responded individually to the spiritual and pastoral needs of postwar migrants, ultimately at the national level the broad nature of the government's immigration program served to change the character and structure of the church itself. This chapter, then, not only illustrates the ways and means by which Australian Lutheranism met the needs of postwar migrants but also reveals at a local level the relationships, communications and negotiations taking place around migrant settlement and assimilation in a process mirroring what was happening at the broader national level.

Following closely from the general efforts of Australian Lutheranism towards migrant settlement, Chapter Four concludes Part Two of the thesis with an ethnic German micro study. This chapter analyses the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia's sponsorship and settlement of a group of ethnic German refugees and their Pastor, Alfred Bittner, in South Australia between 1948 and 1952. On the surface this experiment had all the ingredients of a success story: an ethnically homogeneous German migrant group sponsored and settled in Australia by an existing Australian Lutheran institution, and welcomed by a local community of individual Lutherans. While this chapter reinforces what we have learnt thus far of the importance of government, agency, community and individuals in the settlement of postwar migrants, it more significantly presents a negative case study within the context of this thesis. To differing degrees Pastor Bittner and the church were misguided in their assumptions that the emigration of an entire German congregation, concentrated both ethnically and spatially, was in itself enough to ensure their successful settlement in Australia. Ultimately Chapter Four demonstrates that where the processes of communication and negotiation between government, agency, community and migrants broke down, the migrant experience and

transition into the community was made that much harder (regardless of ethnic and spatial concentration).

Chapter Five returns us to the big picture while still considering the local activities of the GNM through the Good Neighbour Council (GNC) of South Australia. It provides a grass roots example of the wider nature and machinations of postwar migrant assimilation in both a macro and micro setting. It builds on what we have learnt thus far, cementing the notion of assimilation as both a transitional and evolving settlement policy with very practical aims rather than an overriding ideology of total assimilation. It also brings to light the government's policy strengths in fostering legitimate avenues of assistance for migrants through grassroots organisations that engaged with the needs of migrants. This local, personal approach was largely successful because of the Department of Immigration's realisation that the work of settling and assimilating new arrivals could not be achieved exclusively through administrative and departmental avenues, but achieved more directly through local communities, organisations and individuals that came into daily contact with these migrants. Building on the evidence presented in Chapters One to Four, Chapter Five argues that the strength of the postwar provision of migrant settlement services lay in the government's recognition of its inability to implement the personal and humane approach necessary to meet the settlement needs of migrants. To counter this inadequacy, the government engaged with and encouraged the growth of organisations such as the GNC of South Australia to coordinate and foster local community support both for migrants and for the government's immigration program. The Council strived to foster close workable links with the migrant communities it helped as well as other established service providers and support networks that migrants would need to ensure their successful settlement and adjustment to Australian society. What resulted was the establishment of a relationship between migrant groups and bureaucracy, initially facilitated through the GNM and crucial to the birth of Australian multiculturalism.

This thesis argues that in postwar Australia the government's European migrant assimilation campaign, orchestrated at the top by politicians and public servants, was largely interpreted and implemented at a pragmatic level by grass roots organisations and individuals. This combined approach and the hitherto unrecognised work of individual public servants, at both the state and commonwealth levels, fostered a unique dialogue which increasingly brought about better understanding and provision of services for migrants. This early approach



ultimately laid the foundations for the further liberalisation of immigration policy as the century progressed. Constant negotiation of the government's policy of assimilation at the ACCs, through the CIAC, the Social Welfare Section, and agencies such as the Lutheran Church and the GNM allowed for liberal interpretations of the policy on the ground where community organisations came into contact with migrants. This in turn fostered a circular process of communication, negotiation and implementation, an understanding of which ultimately better helps us explain this period of Australian immigration history as the progenitor of multiculturalism.

## 1

## **Australian Citizenship Conventions and the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council: fostering a dialogue**

During the 1950s the Commonwealth Department of Immigration contributed to a unique political and social environment into which Australia received and settled its postwar migrant community. Established in 1945 as part of Australia's postwar redevelopment program, the department was directly responsible for the management of Australian immigration policy and related settlement and citizenship services. It has been widely acknowledged that the entire postwar mass immigration scheme was a closely managed departmental process which enjoyed bipartisan political support throughout the decade. Acknowledgement of this bipartisan approach to the influx of European migrants is necessary to comprehend the shifts that took place in 1950s Australian society, leading ultimately to what Eric Richards has described as a 'social revolution' transforming Australia into a 'variegated and heterogeneous society'.<sup>1</sup>

A central pillar of the Department of Immigration's postwar immigration strategy was broad community, if not migrant, consultation. To this end the department established the CIAC in 1947 and the annual ACC in 1950, as aids to the management of social change brought about by mass European immigration. The activities of the ACCs and the deliberations of the CIAC afford us insight into the evolving and responsive nature of the government's assimilationist policy. As we will see, the impetus behind this policy was the maintenance of the as yet unarticulated aim of social cohesion, rather than 'assimilation', in the face of mass European immigration. As we saw in the literature review, the lasting consequence of postwar immigration was Australia's growing cultural diversity and the emergence of the multicultural state by the 1980s. This chapter documents the beginnings of this shift in immigration policy and practise towards migrant settlement that evolved throughout the 1950s, under the guise of migrant assimilation.

The Department of Immigration employed two key strategies for settling postwar migrants and managing social change: the annual ACCs and the CIAC. The functioning of the CIAC and

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<sup>1</sup> Richards, *Destination Australia*, 383.

the ACCs reveal the beginnings of a negotiated process of communication whereby community responses to assimilation and migrant settlement needs dictated policy as much as, if not more than, government rhetoric. Operating largely at the macro level, through an examination of the proceedings of the ACCs and the CIAC between 1950 and 1960, this chapter argues that the mere existence of assimilationist policy and rhetoric did not dictate its practice. As we will see, the seemingly uncompromising rhetoric of assimilation obscures what was actually happening at this crucial transitional moment: that is, the interpretation and reconfiguring of policy according to government and community experience and migrant settlement needs throughout the decade. This chapter examines the proceedings of the annual ACCs from both the top-down and bottom-up approaches, revealing the interplay between government, business, academic, community and voluntary sectors ostensibly moving towards migrant assimilation but in reality towards the reconfiguring of policy according to local need (be it migrant or community need).

The first ACC was held in Canberra in January 1950 and they continued annually until 1968. The conventions were the brain child of the first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, and a direct by-product of the Chifley Government's postwar mass immigration program. Just as postwar immigration enjoyed bipartisan support throughout the 1950s, so did the citizenship conventions. A survey of the proceedings of the first 11 ACCs, between 1950 and 1960, brings to light a definite shift in government and community responses to the migrant presence. At a micro level the early ACCs reveal the government's preference for, and rhetoric surrounding, British migration and the maintenance of Australian cultural homogeneity. By the mid 1950s the ACCs reveal broader shifts taking place in immigration policy and practice at both the government and community levels whereby recognition of the needs of migrants and the success of future immigration policy became increasingly intertwined. This shift necessitated a growing (if still small) migrant representation at events such as the ACCs, a gradual move away from the term assimilation in official and practical discourses, and a growing recognition of the relative success of the first decade of postwar immigration and consequently support for Australia's growing cultural diversity. At a macro level this shift in policy and practice over the course of the first 11 years of the ACCS suggests that the mere existence of policy did not dictate practice. The often quoted rhetoric of assimilation, disseminated through the ACCs and, as we will see, many other public forums, does not fully explain the nuanced negotiations and relationships that developed during the 1950s between

government, agency and individuals, and forged in large part by the ACCs while seeking to settle European migrants within Australian society.

In one of the first immigration studies to examine the role of the ACCs, Jordens' *Alien to Citizen* depicts the conventions as a political tool for promoting acceptance of the government's immigration program.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Tavan argues that the conventions served a symbolic role, espousing widespread acceptance of the immigration program.<sup>3</sup> Both Jordens and Tavan broadly acknowledge the conventions' role in creating a dialogue between government and community bodies invested with the task of 'assimilating' new migrants. However, they both position this dialogue primarily within a top-down framework of policy enforcement. Patricia Jenkins approaches the sources similarly, distinguishing her argument from that of Tavan and Jordens by showing how the conventions served a dual purpose: on the one hand they were a political tool of the government's assimilationist policy, while on the other hand they reinforced the role of the Australian public in helping to assimilate migrants and disseminate the government's citizenship education campaign. Jenkins condemns the conventions as carefully managed public relations exercises orchestrated by the national political elite, arguing that this 'management' created a forum within which the national elite could exercise power and influence to achieve the government's assimilationist and citizenship aims.<sup>4</sup> To differing degrees Jordens, Jenkins and Tavan all disregard the importance of the avenues of communication fostered by the Department of Immigration and the ACCs. As we will see, what actually took place at the ACCs during the 1950s was a meeting of both the top down and bottom up models of dissemination, interpretation and implementation of government policy, rather than the simplistic enforcement of policy from the top down.

Jordens maintains that the ACC proceedings demonstrate the government's desire to rely heavily on mainstream organisations to implement its assimilationist policy while simultaneously ignoring community recommendations and contributions to this effort. Jordens demonstrates, though, that a cultural change was evidenced in the Department of Immigration during the late 1960s and early 1970s, impacting on their settlement approach and resulting in

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<sup>2</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*.

<sup>3</sup> Tavan, 'Good Neighbours'.

<sup>4</sup> Patricia Jenkins, 'Australian Political Elites and Citizenship Education for "New Australians" 1945-1960.' PhD thesis, University of Sydney, May 2001.

a growing responsiveness to community groups.<sup>5</sup> Tavan similarly points to a cultural change taking place in the wider Australian community by the 1960s. For her this change occurs abruptly after a decade-long staunchly assimilationist approach to migrant reception and settlement. Tavan's examination of the ACCs is closely tied to the activities of the Good Neighbour Movement (GNM) and their assimilationist approach to migrant settlement. She argues that throughout the 1950s the ACCs espoused the government's assimilationist rhetoric and remained committed to the superficial goal of Australia's British cultural homogeneity. Tavan further argues that in many cases the cultural biases of both Good Neighbour and Convention delegates rendered them insensitive and irrelevant to the needs of migrants. She argues that after a decade of pursuing this assimilationist model, the ACC and its community delegates, incorporating the GNM, abandoned the pursuit with 'surprising ease and rapidity'. Tavan concludes that this ready adaptability of mainstream Australian society to adjust to the changes brought about by mass European immigration highlights the transitional nature of 1950s assimilationist policy. While this thesis does not dispute Tavan's argument, it shifts the focus from the 1960s to reveal the genesis of this transitional social and political change as it took root in the 1950s. This is the point at which my thesis differs from previous approaches to this period of Australian immigration history: conclusions drawn from what appears ostensibly to be uncompromising government rhetoric on migrant assimilation leads to a skewed understanding of what actually occurred at this crucial transitional moment. We will see that while the rhetoric was assimilationist, the implementation of policy on the ground during the 1950s afforded existing agencies more liberal and flexible approaches than previously recognised, which in turn supported local initiatives that aided the migrants' transition into the Australian community.

### **The sources**

In researching official response to and implementations of migrant assimilation I have surveyed the general ACC working and correspondence files of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration throughout the 1950s. These files detail not only the organisation and conduct of the annual Conventions but the operations of the department's assimilation and publicity divisions to this end. The files also contain a large correspondence component revealing the day to day communications between the government and participating Convention organisations between 1950 and 1960. To supplement this archival research and

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<sup>5</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, esp. 17, 133, 153-154.

better understand the public face of the Conventions I have also examined *Digest*, the official record of the ACCs, between 1950 and 1960. Published annually, *Digest* was an, on average, 40-page glossy magazine showcasing the year's Convention proceedings, including speeches, resolutions, discussions, delegate listings and group photographs. To gain further insight into the inner workings and evolution of the Department of Immigration's assimilationist policy I have also examined, over a similar period, the agendas, minutes, reports and discussion papers of the CIAC, a departmental advisory council on legislative, sociological and administrative matters pertaining to migrant assimilation and the broader immigration program. The examined archival sources provide evidence of the government's assimilationist strategy played out largely at the macro level and incorporating community consultation and local grass roots implementation. The actions of the CIAC and the ACCs further our understanding of what Tavan refers to as the 'surprising ease and rapidity' with which government and community bodies abandoned the policy of assimilation in the early 1960s: they demonstrate the development of a consultative, responsive, and reciprocal dialogue at the departmental and grassroots levels, incorporating government, academic, civic, business, community and voluntary sectors within the wider Australian community.

### **The Federal Department of Immigration: defining the nation**

The Department of Immigration performed many varied roles under its postwar immigration mandate. It was responsible for all aspects of the immigration program including negotiation and selection of migrants in Europe, transportation and processing of arrivals, right through to settlement, assimilation and publicity for the program. In administering the post-1945 immigration program, the department had three explicit aims. The first was to select European migrants in accordance with labour and population needs; the second was to settle, and hence assimilate, newly-arrived migrants; and the third was to educate the Australian public to ensure minimal disruption to the migrants' transition. This two-pronged approach to migrant settlement and assimilation within Australia reveals a department conscious of the political, financial and, ultimately, social challenges of a mass immigration program to the stability of Australia's postwar national community. Aware of the fundamental and disruptive changes that its mass immigration program could potentially bring, the Department of Immigration sought to counter these as part of its postwar policy of assimilation.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as we will see, it

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<sup>6</sup> Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, esp. 14-18, 57-65.

was the fear of disruption and the unspoken desire to maintain social cohesion that spurred the department's actions towards migrant settlement and assimilation policy in Australia.

The Department of Immigration's first step towards the settlement and assimilation of migrants was to align Australia's mass immigration program with that of the newly passed *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*. Coming into effect on Australia Day 1949, this Act created the concept of an Australian Citizen as opposed to a British subject.<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1949 all Australians were British subjects, owing their allegiance to the monarch, the Queen of England. The Commonwealth's first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, was the driving force behind the new Act. Indeed, as argued by Laurie Ferguson and Warren Gardner, Calwell and the Chifley Labour Government legislated to 'introduce the legal concept of Australian citizenship, as part of its comprehensive agenda of postwar reconstruction and large-scale immigration'.<sup>8</sup> While creating a legal notion of Australian citizenship, Calwell was careful to ensure the new Act was not prejudicial against British migrants. Calwell affirmed in Parliament in 1948 that, 'creation of an Australian citizenship under this bill will in no way lessen the advantages and privileges which British subjects who may not be Australian citizens enjoy in Australia'.<sup>9</sup> The proclamation of this Act began in earnest the political positioning of assimilation with Australia's British heritage.

The Department of Immigration used the new Citizenship Act to help define the average Australian's responsibilities towards immigration and migrant assimilation. The department's 1950s citizenship drive mandated that every Australian citizen had a duty to help receive and settle migrants and, as we will see, its primary aim was to ensure a smooth transition and minimal disruption to the existing social order. Through publicity campaigns, publications, conferences, radio, print media, and church and community groups, the department's Assimilation Activities branch skilfully impressed on the public their responsibilities as Australian citizens towards this goal of settling and assimilating migrants. Likewise, citizenship was viewed as the pinnacle of the immigration program, the marker by which assimilation was measured. Some scholars argue that, in keeping with the original aims of the

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<sup>7</sup> N Stephen, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century* (Canberra: Australian Citizenship Council, 2000), 31. The Nationality Act of 1920 had previously governed the notion of British subjects in Australia.

<sup>8</sup> Laurie Ferguson and Warren Gardner, 'Fostering Australian Citizenship in a Changing World,' in *The Vocal Citizen*, eds. Glenn Patmore and Gary Jungwirth (Victoria: Arena, 2004), 163.

<sup>9</sup> Speech of Arthur Calwell, Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives. Second Reading of the Nationality and Citizenship Bill 1948 (Cth). (Australia: 30 September 1948), 1063.

Chifley Government, this approach manifested itself as a detached drive for migrant assimilation, essentially a process of homogenised nation-building, ‘a matter of turning “New Australians” into real Australians’.<sup>10</sup> As we will see, this approach not only promoted active citizenship amongst ‘old’ Australians but also created ‘new citizens’ amongst the migrant population and contributed to the growing national dialogue and exchange of information on the migrant situation.

### **Australian Citizenship Conventions: coordinating the response to migrants**

The Department of Immigration’s main forum for advancing migrant assimilation policy was the annual ACC. Conceived by the Chifley Labour Government in 1949, the ACCs’ objective was to give immigration, citizenship and assimilation a prominent place in the activities of Australian community groups and institutions coming into daily contact with migrants. The conventions offer direct evidence of the consultative, responsive and fluid process of communication and knowledge sharing that developed throughout the 1950s. In his invitation to all state premiers in October 1949, Prime Minister Ben Chifley had suggested that the conventions might consider ‘ways and means of overcoming by community effort the problems associated with the assimilation of new settlers’.<sup>11</sup> In a press release issued in August 1949, the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, stated that the conventions would ‘promote a nation-wide movement towards a deeper appreciation of the privileges and obligations of Australian citizenship’. Calwell went further:

The Government can bring migrants to Australia, but only those who are in a position to influence their daily lives can make them good Australians. At present many churches, patriotic groups, and individuals are doing fine work in this regard, but the Convention will strive towards co-ordination of their efforts and to develop them.<sup>12</sup>

Thus the purpose was twofold: first, the overarching goal was to promote an appreciation of, and identification with Australian citizenship; and secondly, in pursuance of the first goal, to coordinate and develop the efforts of government, civic, business, community, and voluntary organisations in the related objective of assimilation.

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<sup>10</sup> Wayne Hudson and John Kane, eds., *Rethinking Australian Citizenship* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2. See also Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 171-173; Tavan, ‘*Good Neighbours*,’ 77-89.

<sup>11</sup> Tavan, ‘*Good Neighbours*,’ 78.

<sup>12</sup> NAA: A445, 146/1/1. Australian Citizenship Convention 1950. Press Statement by the Minister for Immigration, The Honorable Arthur A Calwell, 19 August 1949, 1.



The first ACC was held in Canberra in January 1950.<sup>13</sup> It was attended by somewhere between 350 and 400 delegates from around Australia, all of whom had their travel and accommodation expenses met by the Commonwealth Government out of its assimilation funds.<sup>14</sup> As Minister Harold Holt noted to the Department of the Treasury in 1950, these conventions were to ‘represent executives from all religious, civil and state government bodies’.<sup>15</sup> Themes of assimilation and citizenship were paramount at the 1950 Convention, along with a prevailing pro-British outlook. The maintenance of Australia’s British heritage was to be achieved primarily through the encouragement of British migration to Australia. This attitude was evident in the opening speech of Calwell’s successor, Minister Holt, at the 1950 Convention:

We attach importance to ensuring that British immigration is first and foremost in order to retain as much as we reasonably can the present balance of our population. This is a British community, and we want to keep it a British community living under British standards and by the methods and ideals of British parliamentary democracy.<sup>16</sup>

From the outset there was a prevailing sense of Britishness surrounding the immigration program and the efforts of the Australian Government towards the assimilation of the European migrant population. Calwell stated that the initial intent of the Conventions was to encourage community organisations and churches to discuss ways and means of turning new migrants into Australian citizens. He went further to say they would enable all participants to contribute ‘their share in the achievement of the ideal of one Australian family, devoid of any foreign communities, thus preserving our homogeneity and solidarity as a nation’.<sup>17</sup> As we saw in the literature review, many scholars cite the rhetoric of assimilation as evidence of the government’s complete disregard for the real needs of migrants. While it is true that the government’s approach was insensitive, as we will see, the rhetoric and implementation of assimilation evolved throughout the 1950s until it came to embody the foundations of something more akin to an embryonic multiculturalism.

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<sup>13</sup> Calwell stated that the initial intent of the Conventions was to encourage community organisations and churches to discuss ways and means of turning new migrants into Australian citizens. He went further to say they would enable all participants to contribute ‘their share in the achievement of the ideal of one Australian family, devoid of any foreign communities, thus preserving our homogeneity and solidarity as a nation’. NAA: A461, P349/1/1. Letter to Prime Minister JB Chifley from Calwell, 20 August 1949.

<sup>14</sup> Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours,’ 2; the last ACC, held in 1968, had 301 delegates in attendance, ninety-one of them GNC representatives. *Australian Citizenship Convention Digest* (Canberra: Department of Immigration, 1968), 60-63.

<sup>15</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/1/1. Australian Citizenship Convention 1950 General File. Memo to Secretary, Department of the Treasury from Heyes 20 January 1950.

<sup>16</sup> NAA: A438/1, 1950/7/217, Address to the Australian Citizenship Convention by the Minister for Immigration, the Honorable Harold Holt, 24 January 1950, 17.

<sup>17</sup> NAA: A461, P349/1/1. Letter to Prime Minister JB Chifley from Calwell, 20 August 1949.

The following year Holt reiterated the importance of the ACC's assimilationist focus, stating in his opening address to the second Convention that:

Our main concern is the tremendously important problem of assimilation. Governments and their agencies can do a great deal, but when governments have done all they reasonably can, it is for the community to take up the task of converting the migrants into contented and permanent settlers.<sup>18</sup>

Thus within the first two years of operation Holt had used the annual ACCs to lay the groundwork for the implementation of the government's assimilationist policy; the pragmatic provision of assistance to migrants utilising existing community resources, with a view to their absorption into the existing community.

The annual ACCs followed a general format. Delegates convened in Canberra each January for four days of talks, discussion groups and targeted think tanks. The program commonly included: an opening ceremony and welcome by the Minister, discussion groups and papers on issues related to the assimilation and settlement, the formulation of general resolutions from the group discussions which were tabled and then voted upon, followed by a breaking into specialist groups, comprising delegates with relevant interests and knowledge, from which further resolutions and recommendations were formulated. After three days of papers, discussions, and some light entertainment, resolutions were submitted to the Convention Drafting Committee who prepared a consolidated document of resolutions for distribution to the general assembly of delegates.<sup>19</sup> The final act of the convention was for delegates to consider and vote on the prepared resolutions.<sup>20</sup> Following this, the convention was declared closed and Secretary Tasman Heyes would begin the mammoth task of collating and sending out copies of the passed resolutions. As we will see below, all community, social, sporting, religious, business, and volunteer bodies coming into contact with migrants in the course of their daily work received copies of the resolutions from Heyes.<sup>21</sup> Convention resolutions

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<sup>18</sup> NAA: A439/1, 1951/11/300, Commonwealth Jubilee Citizenship Convention. Minister's speeches on Migration. Harold Holt, 'Australia's Immigration Policy - a Victory for Peace,' 22 January 1951, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Resolutions were phased out after the 1955 ACC and replaced by more targeted presentations and discussion groups: Jenkins, 'Political Elites,' 164. This can be viewed not, as Jenkins argues, as an attempt by the department to reduce its public accountability, but as part of a wider policy shift as the needs of migrants, the wider community and the future of the department's immigration program came to be reassessed.

<sup>20</sup> *ACC Digest* (1954), 27.

<sup>21</sup> *Digest*, the annual published proceedings of the conventions was also made widely available to community groups, those interested in the work of the GNM, and students. *ACC Digest* (1950 – 1968).

ultimately impacted, to varying degrees, on the way organisations interacted with and provided services for migrants in their community.

Two years into the program, the Department of Immigration found itself fighting for the right to continue holding the ACCs. On receipt of the 1952 Convention budget of £10,000 in September 1951, Commonwealth Treasurer AW Fadden wrote to Minister Holt that the whole venture was too great an expense for the Government to bear and should be discontinued. The Treasurer explained that it was ‘necessary to make substantial reductions in administrative expenditure and departmental staff’. Fadden further stressed that in order to achieve the government’s financial year objectives it would be ‘essential to abandon projects which are not without considerable merit’.<sup>22</sup> Holt replied eight days later strongly arguing the value of the conventions. He stated that they were ‘very important from an assimilation point of view and in securing goodwill towards the Government on the whole’.<sup>23</sup> Holt included for Fadden a dot point list, compiled with the help of Secretary Heyes, of twelve reasons for the continuation of the ACCs including that they resulted in ‘wide publicity favourable to the Government’. Holt reasoned that the ‘return in publicity and goodwill far outweighs the cost involved’ arguing that a similar amount spent on straight-out publicity ‘could not achieve anything like the same result’. Holt presented the conventions as the Department’s ‘spearhead of the drive for public co-operation in the assimilation of migrants’, further stressing the efficiency of gathering together a mass of people to this end. Holt wrote: ‘The bringing together of such a representative body enables us to brief delegates so that they are able to interpret aspects of government policy and the basis for the Government’s actions.’<sup>24</sup> In the final analysis Holt appealed to the government’s fear of public backlash in that there was ‘still too much anti-immigration and anti-alien feeling in the community to abandon the best weapon we have yet found to combat it’.<sup>25</sup> Holt’s persuasiveness on the importance of the Conventions convinced Treasury that the expenditure was warranted.<sup>26</sup> Treasury funding was secured, enabling the continuation of the annual ACCs until 1968. This was not to be

<sup>22</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A, Australian Citizenship Convention 1952. General File Part 1. Letter to Holt from Commonwealth Treasurer AW Fadden, 6 September 1951.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, letter to Fadden from Holt, 14 September 1951, 1.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, Notes on Proposal to Hold a Citizenship Convention in 1952.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, letter to Fadden from Holt, 14 September 1951, 1.

<sup>26</sup> This was no mean feat given the new Department of Immigration’s relatively low standing in Canberra. According to Richards, the Minister for Immigration did not even normally attend Cabinet meetings. See Richards, *Destination Australia*, 238. However, this was not the last time Holt would have to battle Treasury over funding for Immigration initiatives. Chapter Five further explores tensions between the two Departments regarding the funding of assimilation projects through the GNC.

Immigration's last dealing with Treasury. In Chapters Two and Five we will again revisit the tussle between the two departments over the administration of assimilation funds.

Now secure in its funding, the third successive ACC was held in Canberra in January 1952. The themes were practically identical to those of its predecessors: assimilation, citizenship and immigration policy. There was still a strong current of nurturing Australia's British traditions by increasing the intake of British migrants. A year earlier, during the second ACC, Holt had underscored this by saying the nation could continue with its present immigration program 'without substantially altering the overwhelmingly British preponderance in our population'.<sup>27</sup> In his opening address to the 1952 Convention, Holt again showed his concern for maintaining an Anglo-Australian society, reflecting on 'what an opportunity there is before us to make a nation with basically British characteristics but with a distinctly Australian tradition'.<sup>28</sup> Australia's British heritage was visually illustrated at successive Conventions by the display of alternating Australian flags and Union Jacks side by side in the main auditoriums.<sup>29</sup> It was even resolved at the 1952 Convention that organisations engaged in migrant assimilation work should make an effort to display both flags. The New Settlers League (NSL) and the GNC both responded to this resolution, stating that they would make every effort to display both flags 'wherever and whenever possible'.<sup>30</sup>

While the rhetoric of maintaining a homogeneous Australian society based on British traditions was ever present in Convention addresses, by the second day of the 1952 Convention Holt's attention had turned to the practicalities of the immigration program. He delivered a speech to delegates on 'Future Immigration Policy' in which he announced the scaling back of British migrant numbers for financial reasons.<sup>31</sup> The target was to be 63,000 for 1952. He argued that the government could not 'continue in this period of economic stress to provide accommodation in the proportion of five beds for every effective worker'. Allowances for shipping and housing of European migrants were considerably lower than

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<sup>27</sup> NAA: A439/1, 1951/11/300. Minister's speeches on Migration. Harold Holt, 'Australia's Immigration Policy - a Victory for Peace', 22 January 1951, 3.

<sup>28</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A. Opening Address of Immigration Minister Harold Holt to Citizenship Convention, 29 January 1952, 1.

<sup>29</sup> See *ACC Digest* (1954), 4.

<sup>30</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A. 1952 ACC Resolution no. 57, Flags.

<sup>31</sup> In conceiving Australia's mass immigration program, Calwell had promised that British migrants would account for 90 per cent of all arrivals. By December 1948, Calwell had revised this down to 50 per cent, and by the 1950s the British 'accounted for no more than one-third of the intake'. Richards, *Destination Australia*, 215.

those of British migrants and thus cheaper for the Australian Government on a dependant to worker ratio. To counter this, Holt challenged delegates to make a real effort to attract more British migrants by supplying accommodation and jobs for them, thus removing the financial burden from the government. Holt compared the situation with that of the Europeans already living in Australia, writing that:

a relatively small number of European settlers was able to nominate for 40,000 landing permits last year. If they can do that, it should not be beyond our capacity to nominate a substantially greater number of British migrants.<sup>32</sup>

Still, Holt did not dwell on sentimentalities.

Holt's 1952 ACC speech acknowledged the success of the Displaced Persons scheme which would 'form a chapter in Australian history of which we can be justifiably proud'.<sup>33</sup> Holt then announced the government's contemplation of large-scale immigration from Holland and other northern European countries. He went further to suggest the possibility that future programs would include migrants from former enemy nations such as Germany and Italy. Holt cautioned delegates that the DP scheme was drying up and it was becoming increasingly hard to find suitable migrants from other parts of Europe. He iterated his unease about the prospect of accepting those from former enemy countries, but 'it appears that the greatest reservoirs of people willing to migrate are from Holland, Italy and West Germany'.<sup>34</sup> As we will see later in the chapter, the Department of Immigration and the CIAC actually explored the idea of a German migration program as early as December 1950 and worked behind the scenes to realise this despite Holt's public reservations.<sup>35</sup> This example, then, demonstrates how by 1952 practical considerations were already dictating immigration policy as much as the rhetoric did. In this convention speech Holt challenged delegates, and thus the Australian public, to become intimately involved with the fortunes of the postwar immigration scheme in 1952. As we will see at subsequent conventions, this theme of community involvement is crucial to our understanding of how assimilationist policy evolved throughout the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> While reinforcing

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<sup>32</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3B, Australian Citizenship Convention 1952 General (Part 2). Holt address to Citizenship Convention 'Future Immigration Policy', 30 January 1952, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>35</sup> See also Appendix 1 for further discussion and evidence of the negotiation and management of the West German Assisted Passage Scheme, including communications between the two countries to facilitate this agreement. See esp. Appendix 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7.

<sup>36</sup> Chapters Two to Five build on this theme, demonstrating through the activities of departmental social workers, the Lutheran Churches and the GNM, how this community involvement in policy implementation adds to our understanding of the assimilationist period.

Australia's tradition of British settlers, Holt's speech on the future of the immigration program clearly delineated a practical, economic shift away from a British majority and towards the recruitment of migrants from other European nations. This shift also signalled the beginning of a concerted effort to place the continued success of the immigration program and assimilation of the migrant population squarely in the hands of the Australian people, encouraging not only the creation of new citizens but the promotion of active citizenship amongst 'old' Australians.

While British migrants, colloquially known as 'ten pound poms', continued to arrive in Australia as assisted migrants, the economics of increased British migration proved a barrier to their arrival in greater numbers.<sup>37</sup> However, as late as 1957 the then Liberal Minister for Immigration, Mr Athol Townley,<sup>38</sup> was paraphrased in the official ACC Digest as having said that 'every Government in Australia, State and Commonwealth, no matter what is its political colour, always has and always will give priority to people in the Motherland who want to settle in Australia'.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, while the economics of fostering British migration were a practical barrier, the Australian Government attempted to preserve the rhetoric and notion of an allegiance or bond with Britain throughout the conventions. However, for all intents and purposes the immigration program, the government's assimilationist framework, and the settlement structures being developed throughout the 1950s were primarily geared towards the numerically dominant European migrant populations and, as we will see, rooted in pragmatic outcomes.<sup>40</sup>

Minister Holt's appeals to delegates were not limited to finding ways and means of shouldering the financial burden of British migration. As early as 1952 a pattern of further, more general appeals was evident. The government used the ACCs to call on delegates, as ordinary Australian citizens, to do their bit to help the immigration program succeed. This was

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<sup>37</sup> British migrants were known as 'ten pound poms' because each adult British migrant was required to pay only £10 towards their fare, while all children travelled free of charge. In 1950 the Australian and British Governments contributed equally to the cost of shipping British migrants to Australia. The British continued to reduce financial assistance until in 1954 they set a maximum annual budget of £150,000. 'Inflation quickly eroded the value of the assistance and Australia soon shouldered the entire burden.' Richards, *Destination Australia*, 216.

<sup>38</sup> Townley was appointed Minister for Immigration in October 1956 when Menzies reshuffled the ministry. Holt was elected deputy leader of the Liberal Party.

<sup>39</sup> *ACC Digest* (1957), 16; Britain continued to supply Australia's greatest proportion of migrants throughout the 1950s and 1960s, however, their numbers reduced dramatically after 1972. Richards, *Destination Australia*, 216.

<sup>40</sup> In fact, historians and sociologists have argued that because of this, and a belief that British migrants would have no trouble settling into an essentially British Australian society, British arrivals were significantly disadvantaged and unsupported at an official level. See Richards, *Destination Australia*, 205-206.

apparent in official speeches and general discussions, right through to convention resolutions. This appeal to active citizenship resonated in Holt's address on future immigration policy in 1952 when he reminded the Convention that while the government could bring migrants to Australia and place them in jobs,

In the final analysis the degree of success of the scheme will depend on how the native population absorbs the migrants into its community life. The Government can only play a guiding role; to public-spirited citizens is left the responsibility of good neighbourliness to the new settlers.<sup>41</sup>

This appeal to the average Australian citizen was a constant theme throughout the 1950s ACCs. Australia's Governor General, Sir William McKell's opening address at the 1952 Convention similarly echoed these sentiments. McKell harked back to Australia's forefathers, 'those pioneers were the citizens of yesterday. We, the citizens of today, are the pioneers of Australia's future'. McKell sought to empower the delegates:

I place the growth of good neighbourly activity that has spread throughout Australia in the past two years as one of the most notable social developments in this country's history. I rate it highly because it is based on two of the noblest motives known to mankind. The first of these is the consideration of patriotism and love of country in its best sense. The second is the humanitarian consideration of love of our fellow men.<sup>42</sup>

Further appeals to the Australian public came in the form of publications and in the department's follow up with community groups and delegates to the ACCs.

The early conventions, apart from bringing together all manner of people concerned with the assimilation and welfare of migrants, served to facilitate a dialogue between the Department of Immigration and the various state bodies and community groups. This was not only promoted through direct contact between delegates at the conventions but also in the follow up work undertaken at all levels in the ensuing months. At the conclusion of each convention Heyes sent resolution copies to all represented organisations and other interested parties. The department also published an annual ACC *Digest* for widespread distribution. In return for the resolutions Heyes requested feedback and reports on community activities in relation to migrant work and the recently passed resolutions. These reports filtered back to Heyes in the

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<sup>41</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3B. Holt address to Citizenship Convention 'Future Immigration Policy', 30 January 1952, 7.

<sup>42</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A. Opening Address of 3rd Citizenship Convention by Governor General Sir William McKell, 29 January 1952, 1-3.

months following the convention. Thus the theoretical and deliberative nature of the conventions manifested itself in practical outcomes for both the migrant and Australian populations, with the process monitored by Heyes and the Department. The practical application of convention resolutions also served to promote and reinforce organisational and institutional change within not only the bodies dealing directly with migrants, but also within government departments. As well as facilitating practical outcomes, the conventions took advantage of the wealth of experience and knowledge accumulated by their delegates. Rather than the conventions simply being dictated by the Department of Immigration and its public officials, all invited delegates were encouraged to bring to the discussion tables their existing experiences of dealing with migrant and assimilation issues.<sup>43</sup> This process informed the issues being discussed and imparted practical and expert knowledge to a wide variety of delegates. It also kept the government informed on current work in the field and major issues facing both the new and old Australian communities. Thus the relationship between the theoretical and the practical aspects of the ACCs was validated and strengthened by the government's role of facilitation. In orchestrating the conventions, the Department of Immigration facilitated and promoted a reciprocal process of informed cooperation and imparting of knowledge and experience amongst the attendees and their respective organisations. As a result, Heyes personally amassed a large body of knowledge on the operations of various organisations in the assimilation and settlement fields.

One striking example of the knowledge garnered by Secretary Heyes comes from the 1952 Convention resolutions. Resolution seventy six of the 1952 ACC stated that it was 'desirable that every effort should be made to integrate interested migrants into Australian sporting activities'. The Secretary of the Australian Soccer Football Association, FR Druery, responded to the passed sporting resolution in June 1952, informing Heyes that, 'we have migrant teams playing in our competitions in all States of the Commonwealth in Nationality Teams, and as players absorbed in our own Australian Teams'. The President continued, acknowledging the hurdles they had encountered: 'Unfortunately we find in some states that the education authorities do not co-operate in allowing the child migrants to play the type of football they

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<sup>43</sup> Jenkins argues that the conventions were controlled by the political elite, and convention papers and discussion groups were tightly governed by them. However the discussions arising from general delegates in attendance could not be so tightly controlled and contributed to the growing national dialogue around the practical implementation of the assimilation program. See Jenkins, 'Political Elites,' 167.



are used to; this we find has an effect upon the outlook of the child.’<sup>44</sup> Still, this did not prove a barrier to the formation of many migrant sporting groups throughout Australia during the postwar period. If we consider this more broadly, Jupp argues that ‘nearly all ethnic minority groups formed some sort of organisation soon after their numbers built up’, citing some 2000 migrant organisations registered with the Department of Social Security by 1977.<sup>45</sup>

The Department’s general office file on the 1952 ACC contains over a dozen examples from Australian sporting organisations. Replies indicate the role of sporting organisations in the practical, grassroots approach to settling migrants, as well as encouraging a growing practical dialogue between government, state and community organisations. Heyes received letters from the Australian Soccer Football Association, the Equestrian Federation of Australia, the Australian Badminton Association, the Australian Polo Council, and the All Australian Womens Hockey Association to name a few. The Secretary of the Victorian Amateur Fencing Association wrote to Heyes in June 1952 that their two clubs already counted migrants amongst its members and that they ‘should be pleased to welcome many more’. He prompted Heyes: ‘If you would advise any who may be coming to live in Melbourne of the following two clubs, you may rest assured that they will be well looked after’.<sup>46</sup> Subsequently, departmental Acting Secretary, AL Nutt forwarded the clubs’ details to the GNC of Victoria. A handwritten note from Nutt in the margin reveals that the letter was copied to Armstrong in the assimilation section, from which a corresponding article in the *New Australian*, a monthly bulletin published by the Department of Immigration between 1949 and 1973 ‘to assist European migrants’, was planned.<sup>47</sup>

Sporting associations provide only one example of the growing dialogue, knowledge, and practical assistance towards migrant settlement bred of the conventions. The President of the Australian Federation of Commercial Broadcasting Stations wrote to express gratitude for being included in the 1952 Convention. He relished the chance to promote the work of assimilation in the public realm, informing Heyes that:

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<sup>44</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A. Letter to Heyes from President Australian Soccer Football Association Ltd., 24 June 1952, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A. Letter to Heyes from Secretary, Victorian Amateur Fencing Association, Melbourne, 23 June 1952, 1.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, letter to Secretary of the Good Neighbour Council of Victoria from Acting Secretary AL Nutt, 30 July 1952; see also handwritten note in margin, Armstrong, 30 July 1952.

Members of this Federation have expressed themselves anxious to assist this work, and through commercial broadcasting stations, lend their influence wherever possible towards widening the public cognizance of New Australians and their valuable potential in the national interest.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, a report from the Director of Education in Tasmania demonstrates the benefits accruing from this dialogue between delegates and the department. The Director wrote, in response to resolutions on education and youth activities in 1952, that:

In Tasmanian centers New Tasmanians' Clubs have been formed, and although foreign migrants are rather slow to join these Clubs, it is hoped that in a few years they will not feel so diffident about meeting people whose ways of life are different from their own.

The Director warned Heyes that much of the reluctance on the part of migrants was due to their reception by the Australian community, which as Jupp acknowledges, was on the whole far from welcoming.<sup>49</sup> His experiences informed the view that:

The greatest danger appears to be the feeling some migrants have that they are not wanted. This creates a feeling of antagonism, and in these circumstances migrants will not readily participate in work such as that carried out by Parents and Citizens' Associations.<sup>50</sup>

In 1953 this dialogue continued. The organising secretary of the GNC of Tasmania, Mr W Cumine, reported to Heyes on the resolutions of the 1953 Convention by forwarding four pages of typed notes addressing the upcoming Royal Visit, housing and accommodation, migrant women, naturalisation, assimilation, churches, police, the press, public opinion, and recreation and sport. Regarding the Tasmanian Police Force Cumine reported:

The Tasmanian Commissioner of Police is very "migrant minded" and loses no opportunity to instill into the force under his control the need for tolerance and understanding where migrants are concerned. His attitude appears to be reflected throughout the Police Force generally.

Likewise, Cumine reported favourably on the participation of migrants in sport, writing that the Soccer and Basketball Associations 'in this state are giving encouragement to migrants to participate in their rosters, there are some national or near national teams, but also individual

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<sup>48</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3A. Letter to Harold Holt from President Australian Federation of Commercial Broadcasting Stations, Sydney, 18 March 1952 1.

<sup>49</sup> Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, 10-12.

<sup>50</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/3/3B. Letter to Heyes from Director of Education, Department of Education, Hobart, 17 July 1952, 1-2.

migrants are playing with local teams'.<sup>51</sup> In this same year the Department received a reply from the Travellers' Aid Society in South Australia. They wrote to express their gratitude for the work being done by the Conventions, writing that:

For forty-two years the Travellers' Aid Society in South Australia has met and befriended Migrants. Affiliated with the Good Neighbour Council, the Victoria League and National Council of Women, we are glad to co-operate with you and express admiration for the progress made by your Department and the wonderful work accomplished.<sup>52</sup>

This correspondence did more than just keep Canberra informed and connected with other government, community and voluntary groups working with migrants. It also served to introduce the Department to lesser known voluntary bodies who were already working in the field of migrant settlement and who had already established ties with other assimilationist organisations, such as the Travellers Aid Society. While Jenkins argues that the ACCs were tightly controlled propaganda machines orchestrated by the national elite, the evidence at hand suggests otherwise.

In 1954 secretary Heyes received a response from the Chief Migration Officer in South Australia reporting on the assimilationist work of the Electricity Trust of South Australia, a large employer of migrant labour. This employer had issued a notice welcoming all new 'alien' employees and advising them of the facilities for learning English in the area. This notice was written in the German, Italian and Polish languages. In forwarding this example to Heyes, the Chief Migration Officer conveyed the proactive nature of his State in accommodating migrants in their own languages, while at the same time encouraging them to learn English.<sup>53</sup>

Further evidence of this fluid dialogue and widespread cooperation comes from the Rotary Club of Brisbane, Queensland. Resolution seventy-six of the 1954 Convention urged that 'more be done to bring to Australia a larger number of migrants who are willing to live and work on the land, and that conditions be liberalised to make it possible and more attractive for

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<sup>51</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/9/8. Australian Citizenship Convention 1953 General File. Part 2. Letter to Heyes from WHP Cumine, Organising Secretary, GNC of Tasmania, 11 November 1953, 3-4.

<sup>52</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/9/9. Australian Citizenship Convention 1953 General File. Part 3. Letter to Heyes, from Travellers' Aid Society, North Adelaide, 11 May 1953, 1.

<sup>53</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/8/2. Australian Citizenship Convention 1954 General File. Part 1. Letter to Heyes from Chief Migration Officer, Adelaide, undated, 1-3.

additional people so to live and work'.<sup>54</sup> Chairman HT Lewis replied to the resolution regarding the retention of rural migrants on the land with information on their Club's 'sponsorship' scheme. The Rotary Club of Brisbane had sponsored new Australians to attend Gatton College for two weeks of intensive instruction in Australian agricultural methods. On conclusion of this course the young migrants then went to work in rural areas and, as reported by Lewis, some even went on to buy and work their own land. Lewis reported that by the conclusion of the course in August 1954 a total of seventy-nine New Australians would have completed the two weeks training.<sup>55</sup> A report on the success of the scheme was circulated to all Queensland and northern New South Wales Rotary Clubs as well as to the Department of Immigration in an attempt to get other clubs around the nation to take up the example and help rural areas attract appropriately skilled migrant workers. The report highlighted the coordinated community effort that had made this scheme a success. Fifteen clubs of the 31<sup>st</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Rotary districts had sponsored twenty students for the April 1954 course alone. These students included British, Dutch, German, Italian, Lithuanian and Yugoslavian migrants 'whose future is planned for the land'. The New Settlers League of Queensland, through its networks, aided the Clubs in selecting these students. Chairman Lewis also brought to the government's attention the role played by Gatton College staff who quietly and 'voluntarily forego some of their vacation to lecture to these students'.<sup>56</sup> News of this agricultural scheme was also published on page six of *The Good Neighbour*, a nationwide monthly information bulletin published by the Department of Immigration, in July 1954.<sup>57</sup> This example reveals the pragmatic cooperation of extended community networks to implement, fund, publicise and sustain migrant services (in this case vocational) in Queensland.

The use of the ACCs to appeal to and inform the Australian public continued throughout the decade. One outcome of the 1953 Convention was the joint publication of a booklet by the Department of Immigration and the GNC in 1954, reporting on the implementation of convention resolutions. On the role of the citizen the booklet reflected:

It is realised ... the real task of assimilation lies in securing the

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<sup>54</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/8/20. Australian Citizenship Convention 1954 General File. Part 3. ACC Resolution no. 76, Land Settlement.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, letter to JT Massey, Coordinator of Assimilation Activities, Department of Immigration, Canberra from HT Lewis, Committee Chairman, Rotary Club of Brisbane, 4 August 1954, 1; see also Holt to HT Lewis, 4 August 1954.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, HT Lewis, 'Report on Third Rotary Agricultural Scholarship Course', 30 June 1954, 1.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, letter to Massey from Lewis 4 August 1954. See handwritten notes in bottom margin, Armstrong, 31 August 1954.

sympathetic interest of the average Australian man and woman with whom the migrant shares his daily life. The Department of Immigration is, therefore, anxious to use all available publicity media to ensure that the significance of immigration to the nation and the individual is kept constantly before the general public.<sup>58</sup>

This booklet served to disseminate information on the work of organisations engaged in the task of assimilation as well as to empower Australian citizens to accomplish more. In Chapter Five we will see many more examples of this community goodwill and personal agency in the work of GNM.

Similar sentiments and processes were echoed at the 1954 Convention. With a theme of 'Naturalisation and Citizenship', Australia's Governor General, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, officially opened the Convention, focusing his speech on the role of migrants in the vital process of nation building. He stressed the need for all Australians to become involved and aid in the smooth transition of migrants in an effort to facilitate this nation building exercise. He appealed to the human touch of individual good neighbours: 'You, therefore, have a great task before you; a task that only you, the ordinary people of Australia, can do.' Slim impressed on delegates the importance of this task, adding 'it is nothing less than a vital part in the building of a nation. You deserve well of your country, and on its behalf I thank you'.<sup>59</sup> As we will see throughout the thesis, this recurring theme of ordinary Australian citizens being at the heart of the nation's immigration program, and hence the successful settlement of migrants in Australia, became a central pillar around which much of the practical application of assimilation was built.

In his speech to delegates at the 1954 ACC, Minister Holt borrowed from Australia's history as a settler nation, drawing parallels with the postwar situation. He said on Australia Day 1954 that:

Those who sometimes look sideways at new settlers will do well to remember that it is not so long ago that we ourselves, or our parents, were new settlers in a country which, although old geologically, is still

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<sup>58</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/8/14, 1954 Citizenship Convention Part 2. Report of Action: By the Department of Immigration and Good Neighbour Organisations to Implement Resolutions of the Fourth Australian Citizenship Convention held in Canberra during January, 1953 (Canberra, 1954), 21 of 25.

<sup>59</sup> Field Marshal Sir William Slim, Opening Speech, 'Migration Vital in Building a Nation', in *ACC Digest* (1954), 10.

new in terms of nationhood.<sup>60</sup>

While reflecting on the remarkable feat of having absorbed hundreds of thousands of migrants, of whom over half had come from ‘alien’ lands, Holt remarked that Australia had managed to ‘retain that homogeneous atmosphere which has been characteristic of Australia since Federation’. Further to this, Holt expressed pride that ‘the absorption should have proceeded so smoothly and with such obvious benefit to the nation’.<sup>61</sup> Holt observed that of the hundreds of thousands of migrants who had arrived since 1945, essentially more than half were non-British and that despite this fact the nation had managed to retain its culturally homogeneous nature. Tavan argues that this form of rhetoric demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the government to meet the needs of migrants, and in fact demonstrates the government’s outright refusal to do so lest it upset its assimilationist goals. Strong rhetoric of homogeneity is still evident at the 1954 Convention, but the example of the ACCs reveals a more nuanced shift taking place within all levels of Australian society; a shift from an essentially British nation to one that was, by action and definition, becoming inclusive of both new and old Australians.

Sir Richard Boyer, chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, president of the GNC of New South Wales, and chairman of the 1956 ACC, appealed also to a sense of Anglo-Australian identity in his closing speech at the 1956 convention. Here, however, the emphasis had shifted away from the British and towards the Australian nature of the society. Boyer remarked that the time had come for Australians to show migrants what being an Australian stood for. He cited the Governor General’s opening speech of the previous convention when he had said: ‘always at the back of your minds keep this country British, democratic and Christian’. Boyer used this idea to demonstrate that a shift had been taking place in society whereby a different term was now being used in place of British - that of ‘Australian’. He went on to say, ‘this is a nation in its own right. We Australians are not just Englishmen, Scotsmen and Irishmen living in Australia. We are people with a history .... A history that has done something to us’. Boyer took this thought further: ‘Unless we know what we stand for, and unless what we stand for is good enough, it is we who, in the long term, will be assimilated.’<sup>62</sup> Boyer’s closing remarks to the 1956 Convention reveal that the government was still grappling with shifting definitions of what it meant to be Australian.

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<sup>60</sup> NAA: A445/1, 146/8/14. Harold Holt, Opening Address 26 January 1954, 1 of 6.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, Holt, Opening Address 26 January 1954, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Sir Richard Boyer, ‘We are the people on trial now,’ in *ACC Digest* (1956), 31.

By 1957 the need for the ‘personal touch’ and a sense of nation-building through assimilation had reached a crescendo and begun to wane. Irrespective of official policy, the focus on assimilation at the conventions was fading and a more integrationist approach was emerging. Boyer, in his capacity as president of the GNC of New South Wales, gave a speech on the vital role of the GNC in encouraging migrants to seek naturalisation. His praise for the government’s handling of the immigration program was explicit: ‘It is doubtful if any large immigration has taken place anywhere with better forethought or humanity on the part of a Government than [ours].’ Boyer was well aware of the challenges presented by the experimental nature of Australia’s immigration and settlement program, concluding that ‘the building of our Australian nation through migration, like the building of international citizenship, will occupy not years but generations, and will not be without failures’.<sup>63</sup> This realism, which we will see more of in Chapters Two, Three and Five, was indicative of the approach taken to working with migrants by many organisations present at the conventions, such as the major denominational churches, the GNC and its networks of local community and voluntary groups including the National Youth Council of Australia, the Australian Boy Scouts Association, the Girl Guides Association of Australia, the Australian Newspapers Council, the Association of Apex Clubs in Australia, the Arts Council of Australia, the Airforce Association, and the Amateur Athletic Association of Australia. Assimilation was diminishing as a policy term by the late 1950s but the rhetoric of active citizenship remained. Migrants and Australian citizens had a large role to play in the success of the postwar immigration scheme and the forging of this new Australian nation.

In encouraging and fostering this unique dialogue between commonwealth, state, community, and voluntary organisations, the Department of Immigration amassed a large reservoir of administrative, civic and private bodies eager to assist migrants with settlement and assimilation. Involving them in the implementation of the program, through the ACCs, the Department of Immigration facilitated practical outcomes in the wider community which impacted directly on the migrants themselves. And while it is true that individual migrants did not play a large or explicit role in the conventions until the late 1950s, they did remain a central focus of discussions and outcomes amongst representatives charged with returning to their communities and dealing more directly with migrants. Migrants may not have had an

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<sup>63</sup> Boyer, ‘Good Neighbours have a vital role to play,’ in *ACC Digest* (1957), 25.

effective voice at the conventions until much later but they were represented by many well-intentioned people who worked with them in the community. Jupp makes an important point in that official policy did not recognize the networks of migrant clubs and media that had developed in the larger cities as early as the 1950s, opting instead to reach migrants through ‘mainstream charitable groups organized by the Good Neighbour Councils’.<sup>64</sup> Still, the example of the ACCs provided fertile ground for the exploration of theoretical and practical aspects of the Immigration Program. This was, then, a progressive social experiment in the management of rapid social change; an experiment that grew slowly to accommodate the migrant voice and hence the provision of more appropriate migrant services.

### **The Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council: management of change**

The Department of Immigration did not limit itself to coordinating the assimilationist work of existing groups. It was also proactive in establishing new entities to address and inform the practical work being undertaken in the field of assimilation. To this end the CIAC had been formed in February 1947. Its mandate was to deliberate on legislative, sociological and administrative questions relating to immigration as directed by the department.<sup>65</sup> The council largely consisted of executive representatives from various associations such as the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the National Farmers Union, the Australian Workers Union, the Australian Council of Employers Federations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Air Force Association, the Women’s Christian Association, the National Council of Women and other mainstream community, business and voluntary organisations.<sup>66</sup> Secretary Heyes attended council meetings as the department’s representative, providing administrative guidance when necessary. The department furnished the CIAC with agendas, notes, minutes and research papers for successive meetings. Like the ACCs, the CIAC’s discussions and recommendations offer further evidence of the communication that grew between government, industry, civic, voluntary and community groups during the 1950s.

I have surveyed the minutes of the council’s meetings over a period of seven years from 1950 until 1957 within which time a discernible shift in committee attitudes and the practical

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<sup>64</sup> Jupp, *Immigration*, 157.

<sup>65</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/11. Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 11th Meeting, 11 August 1950. Agenda item no. 4, Function of Immigration Advisory Council and its Relationship to the Immigration Planning Council.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* See also Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 9.



realities of the wider immigration program become evident. Comprising almost one meter of archival records, twenty one committee meetings were held across Australia during this time.<sup>67</sup> By 1950 the CIAC had met ten times. Over the course of the next seven years the council met a further twenty four times, with nearly half of these meetings held in Melbourne. Sydney and Brisbane hosted three meetings each, Perth and Hobart two, Adelaide one, and the migrant centres of Bonegilla and Jindabyne in New South Wales, and Woodside in South Australia, one meeting each.<sup>68</sup> The meetings at migrant centres in particular offer evidence of the council's direct engagement with the communities, employers, and migrants they were deliberating over.

At the eleventh meeting, held in Melbourne in August 1950, the CIAC's members had cause to reflect on their role in light of the establishment of another advisory body, the Immigration Planning Council. The Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council, created by the Department in October 1949, was principally concerned with the short- and long-term industrial and economic consequences of the government's immigration program.<sup>69</sup> The CIAC, however, was more concerned with the sociological and legislative aspects of the program, focusing on European and non-European migration, methods of facilitating migrant assimilation, and general immigration publicity. While both viewpoints were important to the government's overall program of immigration, one approach was sociological and tactical, the other economic and strategic.<sup>70</sup> As we will see from the minutes of their monthly meetings, the activities of the CIAC contribute to our understanding of Australia's 1950s migrant assimilationist policy as evolving, and in practice more nuanced than previously acknowledged. As such the deliberations and recommendations of the CIAC offer further evidence of the informed and fluid dialogue surrounding the settlement of migrants in Australia.

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<sup>67</sup> For bound annual volumes see NAA: Series A2169, Council Meetings - Volumes of Agenda, Notes and Minutes, 13 March 1947 - 6 November 1958.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix 2 for a chronological list of meeting locations and dates.

<sup>69</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/11. Agenda item no. 4. The Immigration Planning Council was established as an arm of the Department of Immigration in October 1949.

<sup>70</sup> While they had independent mandates, the two councils did communicate and cooperate where appropriate. For example, in late 1950 both Councils travelled to the migrant reception centre, Bonegilla, for a joint meeting. NAA: A445, 140/4/12. Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 12th Meeting, 4-5 December 1950.

My survey of the twenty four meetings held between 1950 and 1957 reveals a discernible shift in the council's, and therefore the government's, consideration of immigration issues. In the early 1950s CIAC meetings primarily centred on assimilation, citizenship, naturalisation, immigration publicity, security screening, assisted passage schemes, employment, foreign language publications, yearly immigration arrival numbers, and migrant education. From the mid 1950s the focus was increasingly on issues of social welfare, accommodation, hostels, refugees, and mental illness amongst migrants. Thus there was a realignment of the focus of this council in the decade between 1947 and 1957. By the mid-1950s, as the DP scheme dried up and more bilateral assisted passage schemes came into operation, the Australian Government found itself increasingly preoccupied with the promotion of Australia as a migrant destination. The emphasis had shifted away from gains the government could make in recruiting workers and towards the benefits of the program for migrants.

As an advisory arm of the Department of Immigration, the deliberations of the CIAC provide insight into immigration and migrant settlement issues. For example, in December 1950 a joint meeting of the CIAC and the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council, approved the government's 1951 immigration strategy, which included an early proposal for a bilateral West German assisted passage scheme.<sup>71</sup> The CIAC further endorsed a West German scheme at its thirteenth meeting in March 1951 after noting the strong objection of one of its members. Heyes, in attendance at the meeting, addressed these concerns by reporting on the good 'German stock' observed by Australian selection staff in Europe.<sup>72</sup> In October 1951 the council considered the report of RD Huish, State President of the Queensland Branch of the Returned Sailor's Soldier's and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA). As a representative of the Armed Services, Huish toured migrant camps and selection facilities throughout Western Europe. His primary concern was the process of selection and security screening of migrants. Content that the processes in place would ensure 'Nazi' soldiers were prevented from entering Australia, Huish counseled that if Australia delayed much longer, 'the cream of the German people available for migration will have already been selected and transported to other countries'.<sup>73</sup> The council further discussed the desirability of a West

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<sup>71</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/12. Agenda item no. 4.

<sup>72</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/13. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 19 March 1951. Agenda item no. 16, Immigration Publicity, 5; Minutes, Agenda item no. 16, 12-13.

<sup>73</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/15. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 15 October 1951. Agenda item 2, Report of RD Huish, State President, Queensland Branch RSSAILA, 'European

German scheme in early 1952, after Deputy Chairman, ODA Oberg also toured Europe. Oberg furnished the council with a report of his visit, in which he left the question of German migration to last ‘because there I believe is our best prospective field’. There was an urgency to Oberg’s report which left no doubt in the council’s mind as to the value of Germans as migrants. Quoting an Australian official who had had wide dealings with the German people, General Fanshawe, Oberg wrote of the prospective German migrants, ‘having regard to their personal habits, their social conceptions, the assiduity and love of work, he strongly recommends them as the best material now available in Western Europe’.<sup>74</sup> Thus between 1950 and 1952 the CIAC utilised information furnished to them as well as drawing on first hand knowledge of the immigration program to inform their thinking on the suitability of German migrants for settlement in Australia. Ultimately this led to their support for the Government’s proposed bilateral agreement with West Germany. These early deliberations are evidence of the course that migrant settlement policy and practice was to take during the 1950s. Personal and public experience, communication, consultation, and the sharing of knowledge all came to underscore the process of migrant assimilation in 1950s Australia.

Migrant assimilation, a mainstay of immigration policy throughout the 1950s, was a constant fixture on the CIAC’s agenda. At the eleventh meeting in 1950, four pages of research notes accompanied agenda item twelve, ‘Assimilation of Migrants’. Under this item the CIAC discussed the assimilationist role of the newly established ACCs, the activities of the GNM, and the government’s desire to retain European ‘cultural traits’ in Australia through the promotion of migrant arts and crafts exhibitions. The CIAC’s discussions outlined many of the practical barriers to successful assimilation including housing, English language skills, racial and national antagonisms, uncongenial work placement, and the separation of families. In considering ways to overcome these problems, the CIAC observed that it was the ‘personal element which was the most effective means of making newcomers feel at home and that they belong in Australia’.<sup>75</sup> To this end the CIAC acknowledged the work of the GNM, whose efforts to bridge this gap will be examined further in Chapter Five.<sup>76</sup> Thus as early as 1950 the

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Migration,’ 4-6.

<sup>74</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/16. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 29 February 1952. Agenda item 2, Deputy Chairman ODA Oberg, ‘Report of visit to Europe,’ 12.

<sup>75</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/11. Agenda item no. 12, Assimilation of Migrants.

<sup>76</sup> As we will see in Chapter Two, this personal approach was crucial to the daily operation of the Department of Immigration’s Social Welfare Section. Similarly, in Chapters Three and Four the efforts of individual Lutherans and the wider Lutheran Church in Australia also demonstrate that assimilation policy was mitigated in practice.

CIAC was aligning migrant assimilation with the practical settlement needs of migrants, and its grass roots implementation.

As we have seen through the example of the ACCs, publicity for the immigration program was of key concern to the Australian Government. As such it was often a topic of discussion at CIAC meetings. In preparing the agenda and supporting discussion notes for the thirteenth meeting in March 1951, the Department of Immigration outlined its publicity rationale, which was ‘to attract migrants, to service migrants after selection, to assist their assimilation by an approach to the migrants themselves and to the Australian people’.<sup>77</sup> As recognised by Tavan, Jenkins, Jordens and other historians, in the early years of the immigration program this publicity often took a crude form.<sup>78</sup> One such example is a folk-ballet of ‘Waltzing Matilda’ to symbolise the embracing of Australian traditions by migrants. At its thirteenth meeting in March 1951 the CIAC discussed the folk-ballet, which was to be performed in migrant centers and other ‘appropriate’ venues across Australia. Conceived in the department’s publicity section, by 1951 the ballet had debuted in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. While at one level a superficial interpretation of Australian culture and traditions, the example of the folk-ballet reveals further the process of communication and consideration taking place. Conducted by Australian musician Robin Wood and composed by Hungarian migrant Eugen Utassy, the folk-ballet was performed by migrant dancers under the direction of Aina Reega and Arvid Fibigs of the Australian National Ballet Company.<sup>79</sup> The accompanying orchestra comprised European migrants. After witnessing their debut performance at the Jubilee ACC in January 1951, Minister Holt proclaimed that the folk-ballet was worthy of finding ‘a permanent place in our schools and stage’, while the press billed it as the absolute highlight of the convention.<sup>80</sup> These rudimentary attempts to imbue migrants with a sense of ‘Australianess’ while concurrently publicising and ‘selling’ the immigration program to the wider community were prevalent in assimilationist policy during the early 1950s. Tavan describes these attempts as ‘cultural exhibitions for Australian consumption’ which had at best ‘novelty value, and appear

<sup>77</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/13. Agenda item no. 6, Immigration Publicity.

<sup>78</sup> See Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*; Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’; Jenkins, ‘Political Elites’; Lack and Templeton, *Bold Experiment*.

<sup>79</sup> Eugen Utassy had been a dance master at the Drury Lane Theatre, London. He had also worked in Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Budapest and New York. Mr Robin Brown was Director of Radio Australia. ‘Migrants to perform Australian folk-dance,’ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1951, 2.

<sup>80</sup> A review and accompanying photograph of the opening ceremony appeared on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* on Tuesday 23 January 1951. It was similarly reported in the Canberra Times. See ‘Pageantry, Colour and Music for Convention,’ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 January 1951, 1; ‘New Australians Make Music,’ *The Canberra Times*, 26 January 1951, 4.

to have given little insight into the migrant experience'.<sup>81</sup> However, as we have seen with the ACCs, and as we will continue to see, through the actions of the CIAC and the GNC, the broader ramifications of the government's assimilationist publicity were the conditioning of Australian society and the engendering of cooperation, communication and coordination of migrant settlement policy at all levels.

In July 1951, the CIAC was presented with an 'Empire Youth Booklet', published by the Department of Immigration in 1951 and distributed to migrant children on arrival in Australia that year. The booklet outlined the story of the British Royal family with the aim of encouraging migrant children 'to appreciate the relationship between Australia and the Crown and to share our traditional loyalties'.<sup>82</sup> Again we see the government's attempt to instil in migrants a sense of Australia's British traditions as part of its publicity campaign. The CIAC endorsed the booklet, concluding that it served a useful purpose. Interestingly, the Council went further to recommend that the government publish an additional booklet dealing with ANZAC Day and its significance in Australian, as opposed to specifically British, history.<sup>83</sup> Thus the discussions of the Council reflect what was transpiring at a wider level, including at the ACCs. The conception of the nation along purely British lines was giving way to a more specifically Australian perspective.<sup>84</sup>

The following year the Department looked to publish another publicity booklet, this time targeting an Australian, as opposed to a migrant, audience. To this end, the government again sought feedback from the CIAC. The booklet was tabled at their seventeenth meeting in June 1952. It proposed to inform the public of the historical and cultural backgrounds of Australia's newly settled migrants. The agenda item notes supplied by the department reasoned that:

The migrants themselves feel that if their historical, economic, political and general background were presented in a way that Australian citizens could understand, it would greatly facilitate their acceptance into the community.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Tavan, 'Good Neighbours,' 81, 84.

<sup>82</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/14. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 14th Meeting, 02-3 July 1951. Agenda item no. 14, Empire Youth Booklet.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*, Minutes, Agenda item no. 14, Empire Youth Booklet.

<sup>84</sup> See Jordens, *Redefining Australians: Immigration, citizenship, and national identity* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1995).

<sup>85</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/17. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 17th Meeting, 5-6 June 1952.

This example demonstrates an awareness of the migrants' history and an appreciation of their social, political and economic situation prior to arrival in Australia. Arguably, these booklets addressed both migrant and Australian concerns in a superficial manner, but we must acknowledge, too, that once again, it is the process which is important. By initiating discussions with and inviting feedback from the CIAC, the Department of Immigration again demonstrated its capacity to identify, inform, consult and coordinate on issues of migrant settlement and assimilation.

The same meeting in June 1952 provides further evidence of what appears on the surface a superficial approach by the government towards migrant settlement. The CIAC was advised that official policy emphasised that 'assimilation activities were intended to bridge the gap between the migrant's arrival and his absorption in the community' and furthermore that, 'once he is in touch with normal community facilities, he ceases to be the subject of special treatment'. Thus, once assimilated, migrants would access help through the same channels open to all Australians.<sup>86</sup> This succinct definition of the government's assimilation policy reveals the extent to which the government aligned its policy of assimilation with the provision of settlement services for migrants. Still, while the government's immediate aims of assimilation were the short-term facilitation of settlement and citizenship services, its long-term view was to facilitate the migrants' complete absorption into the existing community. As this thesis will continue to demonstrate, the unintended consequences of this implementation were far removed from the government's original assimilationist ideals.

The initiation of a bilateral agreement with the West German Federal Republic in late 1952 coincided with a strategic policy shift in the Australian immigration program. In December 1952 the CIAC was addressed personally by Minister Holt, who touched on this shift. Holt talked at length about the immigration program and migrant assimilation in general, and then spoke further of the role of bodies such as the GNC:

Within Australia the wholehearted support of the Good Neighbour Movement would be essential to overcome the resistance and prejudice of the native born Australian community to European migration. Only by this means could the assimilation programmes be realistically carried out.

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<sup>86</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/17. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 17th Meeting, 5-6 June 1952 Minutes, Agenda item no. 4, Recommendations of the Committee on Social Welfare of Migrants, 6.

He expressed his gratitude for the GNM in South Australia in particular, which he had recently visited, observing that ‘a good spirit was evident’. Holt informed the CIAC that there were already some 350,000 European migrants residing in Australia and that these people should have the opportunity to sponsor their families to come to Australia. As always, Holt couched his point in assimilationist terms, arguing that:

This seed migration is a particularly desirable form of migration as the sponsors are required to arrange employment and accommodation for their nominees and the assimilation of the newcomers is more readily assured.

This shift in immigration policy towards the fostering of family rather than labour oriented migration was reiterated by Holt in his address to the council in 1952:

One result of the recent changes in the economic and employment situation has been that the opportunity can now be taken to transfer the emphasis in the programme from the selection of workers for specific labour demands to the inclusion in the migrant intake of a greater proportion of family groups.

Holt continued that this change would ‘assist considerably in correcting the past unbalance in the migrant intake’.<sup>87</sup> We know that this was achieved in the South Australian German migrant community in particular where the Migrant Database attests to the maintenance of stable gender ratios and a predominance of family migration under the West German Assisted Passage Scheme between 1952 and 1961.<sup>88</sup> Holt’s announced change in emphasis indicated a discernible policy shift from short-term economic gains to longer-term social gains, ostensibly driven by the assimilationist goals of the Australian Government, and as we saw in Chapter Two, correlates closely with the social workers’ findings of the importance of family support structures in successfully settling migrants.

This change in policy also brought with it renewed efforts in the area of immigration publicity. In April 1953 the CIAC considered the Department’s plans to increase the migrant intake for the 1953-1954 financial year. The Council was informed that their support for existing and future programs would greatly assist the Minister in his policy work. As well as increasing the

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<sup>87</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/19. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 19th Meeting, 17 December 1952. Minutes, Agenda item no. 2, Address by the Hon. HE Holt, MP.

<sup>88</sup> See Appendix 1.5-1.7.

overall migrant intake, Holt sought the Council's support for including in this increase a higher proportion of dependants to workers.<sup>89</sup> After deliberations, the Council concluded that this favoured policy shift would not be received well by the general public. To this end the department, and hence the council, focused much energy on publicising the program.

It was in this milieu of policy shift and heightening publicity that the West German Assisted Passage migration scheme came into operation at the end of 1952. Almost immediately good news stories began to appear.<sup>90</sup> One such story involved a select group of German migrants working in the Snowy Mountains. It reveals the intersection of government and advisory bodies, publicity, communication, and community and employer consultation in the field of assimilation. In November 1953 CIAC members travelled to Jindabyne for their twenty-second meeting, thus coming face to face with the migrant settlement process. During their stay they visited the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme worker camps, housing migrants of all European nationalities. The council visited the Polo Flat housing factory on the outskirts of Cooma where the Snowy Mountain Authorities had erected a factory for producing prefabricated housing for their workers. The factory was staffed entirely by German Special Project (SP) workers of whom the factory manager had only positive words to say. The manager reported to council members that while 'there were the initial teething troubles ... now they were most satisfactory and their workmanship and capacity could not be faulted'.<sup>91</sup> The council forwarded this story to the department with the suggestion that it be used in their publicity campaign on the benefits of German migration. Again, this evidence could be viewed simplistically as government propaganda. If we place it in the larger context of this thesis, however, the activities of the council reveal further evidence of the informed and cooperative process developing around the policy of migrant assimilation.

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<sup>89</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/21. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 20th Meeting, 16-17 April 1953. Minutes, Agenda item no. 3 and no. 19, Survey of Responsible Public Opinion on the Immigration Programme and European Assisted Schemes - Nomination Procedure for Dependants and Other Special Arrangements. We also know, from the discussion of German migration in Appendix 1, that the government was aware of the need to encourage family migration as the recruitment of young single migrants was no longer feasible. See Appendix 1.6.

<sup>90</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/13. Agenda item no. 16, Immigration Publicity, 5. The Government had been explicit in their plans to usher in the West German scheme with a barrage of good news stories. The Department made plans to give their arrival 'the full force of publicity similar to that accorded to the displaced persons'.

<sup>91</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/23. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 22nd Meeting, 26 November 1953. Minutes, 'Report of Tour of Snowy Mountains Scheme, 25th to 27th November, 1953'.



Similarly, the CIAC deliberated on matters such as the postwar migrant gender imbalance, and in this case specifically German migrants, in an attempt to counter negative publicity and manage immigration's impact on the wider Australian community. A 1952 report of the council noted criticism in Germany concerning the recruitment of predominantly young males. It also observed that 'the Australian population already has a preponderance of males, and one wonders to what extent we can wisely continue to bring in more young males without making provision for an equivalent number of females'.<sup>92</sup> Soon after the signing of the bilateral agreement with West Germany, the CIAC again addressed the issue in the hope of rectifying the gender imbalance created by the earlier SP scheme. The council acknowledged, however, that this would be difficult to orchestrate because most German men were working on 'projects and in regions where employment was not available for single females and the bringing of women to Australia did not solve the problem if they congregated in capital cities'.<sup>93</sup> However, the issue became less prominent in the council's deliberations after 1952, as the assisted passage scheme maintained a more consistent ratio.<sup>94</sup> Thus here we have evidence of the government's socially engineered immigration program, with the use of advisory councils such as the CIAC to facilitate this.<sup>95</sup>

As discussed earlier, the attainment of citizenship was the marker by which the Government measured the success of its migrant assimilation policy.<sup>96</sup> Once the migrants' commitment to the nation was confirmed, they became naturalised citizens and were hence considered assimilated. In this way notions of migrant assimilation were increasingly aligned with Australian citizenship. Thus again, at the direction of the department, the CIAC devoted considerable time and effort to issues of Australian citizenship and migrant naturalisation. The efforts of the CIAC and the Department of Immigration to fashion a Citizenship Charter in the mid 1950s are important in this context.

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<sup>92</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/17, Agenda & Minutes of Meetings Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council 17th Meeting, 1952.

<sup>93</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/18, Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council - Agenda & Minutes 18th Meeting 19 September 1952. Minutes, 3.

<sup>94</sup> The Migrant Database suggests that the West German Assisted Passage Scheme achieved its goal of correcting the gender imbalance amongst the German migrant community. In 1947 the gender ratio of Australia's German born population was 160 males to 100 females. By 1961 this gap had closed significantly with the ratio being 111:100. Similar trends were seen in the Italian, Dutch and Greek born populations. Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 29. See also Appendix 1.5 for further discussion of the figures.

<sup>95</sup> See Appendix 1.5 for further discussion and evidence of the management of this gender disparity amongst the postwar German migrant community in South Australia.

<sup>96</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 174; Tavan, 'Good Neighbours,' 85.

In 1952 the CIAC considered a resolution of the ACC of that same year which stated that ‘a Manual of Citizenship should be given to each migrant at the time of his naturalisation’.<sup>97</sup> After some discussion the council reasoned that because migrants were required to have a good knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship upon naturalisation, it was therefore necessary to disseminate this information prior to, rather than upon, naturalisation.<sup>98</sup> The booklet, articulating the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship, was initially drafted in 1949 but had undergone many successive rewrites in order to simplify the language for migrant comprehension.<sup>99</sup> In considering this booklet, the council reported that as well as informing migrants of their rights and responsibilities as an Australian citizen, the booklet should give applicants ‘a better appreciation of Australia and our citizenship’.<sup>100</sup> Thus again, consultation between the Department of Immigration, ACC delegates and the CIAC towards a manual of citizenship offers further evidence of the fluid dialogue developing around the process of migrant assimilation.

At the same meeting of the CIAC in 1952, the notion of a special ‘Citizenship Day’ was tabled. On this day naturalisation ceremonies celebrating the migrants’ transition from ‘alien’ to Australian citizen were to be held across the nation. Deferred until the following meeting, the idea of a dedicated Citizenship Day failed to gain momentum or support. The idea was officially abandoned two years later when a resolution passed at the sixth ACC stated that a special Citizenship Day ‘should not be observed generally throughout the Commonwealth, but that on Australia Day more emphasis be placed upon citizenship’. The resolution went further to recommend that local councils be urged to hold functions on Australia Day and other suitable days when ‘children would be asked to participate, and when the meaning of citizenship and the Australian flag would be explained to them’.<sup>101</sup> Here, again, the practical application of departmental assimilationist bodies such as the CIAC and the ACCs demonstrate the localised emphasis of the citizenship and migrant assimilationist programs.

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<sup>97</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/17, Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 5-6 June 1952.

<sup>98</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/18. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 19 September 1952. Agenda item no. 19, Immigration Publicity, Booklet entitled ‘How to become an Australian citizen,’ 1-2.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, ‘Immigration Publicity,’ 1.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>101</sup> *ACC Digest 1955* (Department of Immigration, Canberra, 1955), Resolution no. 2-3, Citizenship.

In August 1953, at the twenty-first meeting of the CIAC, the question of a Charter of Australian Citizenship was tabled. An open-ended discussion followed and a decision on the matter was deferred until the following year.<sup>102</sup> The issue was again raised by council at its twenty-third meeting in March 1954, when a question was put to the department's representative, Mr Nutt. Nutt explained to the council that there were difficulties involved in articulating the Charter and that the department was looking into similar charters used in the United States and Canada.<sup>103</sup> At its following meeting the council discussed further the government's proposed Charter, stating that it should 'tell the newly naturalized citizen of the ideals we associate with the democratic way of life, the duties that the individual accepts and the privileges which he enjoys on becoming an Australian citizen'.<sup>104</sup> The task, initially directed towards impressing on migrants the privileges of becoming 'Australian', proved difficult. The CIAC and the Department of Immigration struggled to reach a definition of Australian citizenship for another 18 months before eventually abandoning the pursuit. Ultimately the department recognised the need for such a 'Charter' or 'Statement of Citizenship' to encompass all current and potential citizens, not just migrants.

In January 1955, at the direction of the Department of Immigration, the Charter was again discussed, this time by delegates to the ACC. A resolution was subsequently passed requesting that the Minister for Immigration approach the CIAC with a view to drafting a 'Statement of Australian Citizenship'.<sup>105</sup> Thus in March 1955 the CIAC met to consider the Convention's resolution. In keeping with the consultative nature of the conventions, the resolution specifically requested that this draft 'be circulated to all organisations and Churches concerned for their consideration' prior to the 1956 Convention.<sup>106</sup> In considering the resolution, the CIAC recommended that the Minister appoint a small committee, not

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<sup>102</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/22. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 6-7 August 1953. Minutes, Agenda item no. 16, Charter of Australian Citizenship.

<sup>103</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/24. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 19 March 1954. Minutes, Agenda item no. 8, Resolutions of the Australian Citizenship Convention 1954, 7.

<sup>104</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/19. Minutes, Agenda item no. 6, Call to the people of Australia, 12.

<sup>105</sup> NAA: A2169, 1955. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council - Agenda, Notes and Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> meetings held during 1955. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 24-25 March 1955. Agenda item no. 17, Sixth Australian Citizenship Convention Resolutions, Charter of Australian Citizenship, 1 of 2. This evidence elaborates on the evidence of Tavan who wrote that 'the task proved too difficult. A decision on the charter was deferred till 1956, effectively spelling the end of the idea'. Tavan, 'Good Neighbours,' 6. This was not the case. However, ultimately by 1955, as acknowledged by Jenkins, the Charter had simply outlived its purpose, and fell outside the realms of the department's settlement program. Jenkins, 'Political Elites,' 190-191.

<sup>106</sup> NAA: 2169, 1955. Agenda and Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 24-25 March 1955. Agenda notes, Item no. 11, Charter of Australian Citizenship.

necessarily of the council, to draft a Charter of Australian Citizenship for further consideration by council members.<sup>107</sup> This did not eventuate, with the Minister requesting that the CIAC form such a committee from its own ranks.<sup>108</sup> The Minister reasoned that the council was better placed to ‘afford representative organisations and citizens the opportunity of expressing their views on the questions as to whether a Charter is desirable, and if so, its form’.<sup>109</sup> This sub-committee proceeded to meet in October 1956 to consider the question of a charter. The result was a four page report acknowledging the difficulties of drafting a charter, the need for such a document to target all citizens and not just migrants, and ultimately recommending a statement of responsibilities as a more appropriate goal.<sup>110</sup> Thus, in December 1955 the pursuit of a Charter of Citizenship was abandoned. The resulting task of writing a statement of responsibilities was directed to Charles Waterman of the Department’s general division, at which time Secretary Heyes reasoned that ‘it may be desirable eventually to have the assistance of someone outside the department, the task of describing citizenship’s implications being not necessarily one for Departmental officers’.<sup>111</sup> The CIAC, however, pursued the idea of a ‘statement on the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship’ on conclusion of its sub-committee report.<sup>112</sup>

Following the CIAC’s Citizenship Charter sub-committee report, individual council members were canvassed and asked to submit their personal ideas about citizenship. One council member proffered that ‘the object should be to implant the highest ideals of citizenship in the mind of the newly-naturalised person’.<sup>113</sup> A five page draft, a combined departmental effort, was circulated the following year at the thirty-third meeting of the council in August 1957. Its opening sentence read, ‘you are now a subject of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia’. The five pages detailed Australia’s parliamentary democracy and the rights of the citizen, including the right to seek the help of the courts; the right to privacy; the freedom to worship, form opinions and express them; and

<sup>107</sup> NAA: 2169, 1955. Agenda and Minutes of 26th Meeting, 24-25 March 1955. Agenda notes, Item no. 11, Charter of Australian Citizenship, 8.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*, Agenda and Minutes of 27th Meeting, 7-8 July 1955. Agenda notes, Item no. 5, Charter of Australian Citizenship.

<sup>109</sup> NAA: A446, 1955/67340, Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Committee, ‘Charter of Australian Citizenship’, 1955 – 1955. Summary of previous discussions by the Advisory Council, 1.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, Committee Report on Charter of Australian Citizenship, 3.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*, internal memo to Mr Waterman from H McGinness, Department of Immigration, 2 December 1955, 1.

<sup>112</sup> NAA: A2169/3, 1956. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, Agenda and Minutes of the 29th, 30th and 31st Meetings. Minutes of the 29th Meeting, Agenda item no. 5.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid*, Agenda item no. 5.

the right to move about freely inside Australia's borders and enjoy the protection of the Commonwealth while overseas. Responsibilities as an Australian citizen included participating in the parliamentary system of government and respecting the rights of others.<sup>114</sup> The draft statement reinforced the notion that each migrant played a great role in the development of Australia. It reminded them that:

the pattern of life here is not fixed. You have become a member of a nation with vitality, a nation that is young and is working out its destiny and grappling with vast problems.... You have come to Australia at an exciting, dynamic and historic time.<sup>115</sup>

The migrant had become part of the process of defining Australian citizenship. Discussion was deferred until the following meeting, giving members time to consider and reflect on these lofty notions, but ultimately the task was abandoned. The evolution of this specific attempt to define Australian citizenship amidst the influx of European migrants has parallels with the evolution of Australia's postwar migrant settlement policy more broadly. Initially conceived in negative terms to reinforce the homogeneous British nature of Australian society, both the ideals of Australian citizenship and of migrant settlement policy came to recognise implicitly the migrants' right to a voice in that society. Furthermore, on a more practical level, the significance of this specific failed attempt to define Australian citizenship is its illustration of the growing cooperation and referral between the government, the CIAC, and ACC delegates in relation to migrant settlement and assimilation. This circular process of cooperation, referral, and knowledge sharing grew during the 1950s under the guise of migrant assimilation.

The CIAC continued to meet and consider the principal issues surrounding the government's immigration program throughout the 1950s. By 1956 the immigration program had endured minor fluctuations in numbers but the government's long-term vision was still at the fore of immigration policy. A resolution passed at the ACC that year encapsulated this:

We have reached a point in our history of acceptance of the migration programme at which we are looking at this problem not so much in terms of an economic balance sheet as in terms of our long-term nationhood and of human beings coming here to join us in the making of our history.

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<sup>114</sup> NAA: A2169/3, 1957. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, Agenda and Minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, 22-23 August 1957. Minutes, Agenda item no. 11, Statement for naturalised Australian citizens on the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid*, 5.

The resolution continued that the new program ‘for the next 1,000,000 migrants may put stresses and strains upon our economy and upon us in our every day lives’ but that the Australian people should, where necessary, ‘make such sacrifices as will allow it to proceed’.<sup>116</sup> As reported at its thirty-first meeting in October 1956, the Convention unanimously supported the proposed continuation of the immigration program regardless of any short term economic hardships, as did both the CIAC and the Immigration Planning Council.<sup>117</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As we have seen through the example of the ACCs and the CIAC, by 1956 the government’s policy of assimilation was giving way to a more integrationist approach to settling migrants. This shift was given official recognition in 1956 at the thirty-first meeting of the CIAC. A committee to consider the direction of the annual ACCs resolved that the issue of assimilation had been exhausted and that more emphasis should be placed on ‘the contribution which migration can make both to the destiny of the British Commonwealth and to Australia’.<sup>118</sup> It was not until 1959, however, that the ACC officially agreed that ‘immigration policy should aim at integration of new settlers rather than assimilation’.<sup>119</sup> This shift away from talking of the assimilation of migrants into the existing culture, and towards the integration of migrants into society without the loss of cultural and ethnic differences was underpinned by an earlier address to the CIAC by ANU academic WD Borrie in October 1956. His address placed Australia’s immigration program in its international context, highlighting issues of past migration and parallels with other migrant countries. Borrie expressed admiration for the ‘sense of responsibility in the present leaders of migrant societies and newspapers’ adding that this sense of responsibility had been ‘a major factor in making the Australian public so much more tolerant and cooperative to the first generation immigrants’. Borrie continued: ‘I can’t help hoping myself that the outcome will not be a “cultural pluralism” preserved by closed ethnic groups, but the cultural pluralism that may sometime come when everyone born in

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<sup>116</sup> NAA: A2169, 1956. Minutes of 31st Meeting 25-26 October 1956, Agenda item no. 6, discussion paper ‘What Immigration Means to Australia’, 11.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*, Agenda item no. 3, Programme for 1956/57 and Agenda item no. 6, paper ‘What Immigration Means to Australia’; see also Minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 5-6.04.1956, Agenda item no. 3, Immigration Programme for 1956/57.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid*, Agenda item no. 13, Report of Committee on 1957 Citizenship Convention.

<sup>119</sup> *ACC Digest* (1959), 28-32. See also *ACC Digest* (1960), 10-12, where delegates were clearly focused on the integration rather than assimilation of migrants.

Australia is a cultural plurality in himself.’<sup>120</sup> Borrie’s observations mirror changes taking place in Australian society at the time. The rhetoric of the government’s postwar immigration program suggested the assimilation of migrants into the existing society, while the practical application of assimilation policy fostered something quite different. The Department of Immigration’s actions towards assimilation fostered consultative, informative and communicative processes, using bodies such as the ACCs and the CIAC, to manage this change at administrative, civic and social levels. As we will continue to see, this management of social change at the macro level, underpinned by a desire to maintain social harmony, if not a homogeneous British-Australian society, is fundamental to our understanding of the evolution of migrant assimilationist policy in postwar Australia.

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<sup>120</sup> NAA: A2169, 1956. Minutes of 31st Meeting 25-26 October 1956, Agenda item no. 34, Some Lessons from Earlier European Migration to Australia, Canada and the U.S.A.

## 2

## **Departmental social workers and migrant welfare: social and administrative collaboration**

In 1949 the Commonwealth Department of Immigration established a social welfare section to deal directly with personal, as opposed to administrative, aspects of migrant assimilation. Initiated and headed by professional social worker, Hazel Dobson, this departmental section was staffed largely by state-based university qualified social workers and provided post-arrival services to Australia's migrant population. Indicative of a wider dearth of historical scholarship on the Australian social work profession, the literature documenting the specific postwar activities of these departmental social workers is sparse. This chapter seeks to fill this gap, in part, by analysing at the micro level the activities of departmental social workers and placing their activities within the wider context of Australia's postwar approach to assimilation of European migrants. Analysis of the social welfare section's actions at the macro level furthers our understanding of social work as an emerging practical profession that operated within the framework of assimilation to address individual migrant social welfare needs while contributing more broadly to a growing national conversation on policy implementation and the needs of migrants.

Perceived as primarily the domain of women, the social work profession in Australia attracted many 'bright, well-educated, and independently minded women' to its ranks.<sup>1</sup> In one of the most comprehensive studies to date, RJ Lawrence documents the professionalisation of Australian social work throughout the twentieth century. Lawrence outlines how social work emerged in Australia in the 1920s (following on the heels of its UK and American counterparts), with four universities providing professional training by the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> It was a small, practical profession which was value oriented and influenced by its political context. Lawrence argues that despite their small numbers, Australian social workers contributed to an expansion of social services to all Australians during the mid- twentieth century. As we will

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Crawford, Sabina Leitmann, 'The midwifery of power? Reflections on the development of professional social work in Western Australia,' *Australian Social Work* 54 (September, 2001), 49.

<sup>2</sup> These were the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane. See RJ Lawrence, *Professional Social Work in Australia* (Canberra: ANU, 1965).



see, the postwar years brought with them enormous opportunity for the growth of the profession. Lawrence notes how after 1945 professional social workers were employed in government and non-government agencies alike, and as such many came into contact with migrants during the course of their daily roles.<sup>3</sup> By 1954 there were 368 qualified social workers employed across Australia, with 151 and 217 employed by government and non-government agencies respectively.<sup>4</sup> The Commonwealth Department of Immigration employed twenty-one social workers at this time, only four fewer than the Department of Social Services and one fewer than state based ‘mental hospitals’ and clinics.<sup>5</sup> What followed, then, during the 1950s was a brief but intense period of opportunity for departmental social workers to exert their professionalism in the field of migrant settlement and social welfare.<sup>6</sup> Contemporary scholarship suggests that during this period the profession relied for the most part on individual ameliorative casework within the migrant community.<sup>7</sup> In the early 1960s, fifteen years after the first displaced persons arrived in Australia, the Department of Immigration drastically cut the number of social workers employed to work directly in the field of migrant settlement. The short lived nature of the Social Welfare Section accounts, in part, for the sparse literature on early social work amongst Australia’s postwar migrant population. Furthermore, the reduction of the Department’s social welfare services in the 1960s contributed to a dispersal of the section’s collective knowledge of migrant settlement needs, garnered throughout the 1950s. These two factors, staffing cuts and dispersal of knowledge, explain the common narrative on postwar migrant social welfare: that assimilation policy dictated and ensured that no particular efforts were made to assist migrants in the area of social welfare.<sup>8</sup> While to an extent this is true, broad generalisations about the assimilationist period skew our understanding of what actually happened. This chapter, examining in detail fifteen years of departmental social welfare provision to migrants,

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<sup>3</sup> Lawrence, *Professional Social Work*, 163. These agencies included, but were not limited to, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Immigration, the Department of Child Welfare, the Red Cross Society, the Family Welfare Bureau, and state based Hospitals.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, 168.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, 168.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 163; Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, esp. 31-49.

<sup>7</sup> Lindsey Napier and Janet George, ‘Changing Social Work Education in Australia,’ *Social Work Education* 20 (2001), 76.

<sup>8</sup> Tilaka Wickramasinghe, ‘Out of mind, out of sight: government policy on migrants’ mental health, Australia 1960-2000’ PhD thesis, University of Wollongong, 2005, 271; and E Bates and S Linder-Pelz, ‘Health Case Issues’ (1987), 2, quoted in Wickramasinghe, ‘Out of mind’, 41. But Jupp acknowledges that there was a steady growth of social and welfare assistance to migrants between 1945 and the 1980s, largely credited to the actions of the Department of Immigration; see Jupp, *Immigration*, 167-171.

advances our understanding of the evolution of postwar immigration policy towards the era of multiculturalism.

Tilaka Wickramasinghe, in her 2005 PhD thesis on Australian postwar migrant mental health, wrote that ‘in the fifties and sixties the government accorded migrant mental health matters a low priority’.<sup>9</sup> This neglect was not exclusive to the migrant population, however, and applied equally to Australia-wide mental health services at this time. While in general terms postwar social welfare services for migrants were inadequate, this thesis seeks to ascertain what that experience reveals of the process of policy modification through consultation, knowledge and experience, a process we first saw in action through the ACCs and CIAC in Chapter One. As we will see, specific advances were being made by social workers, not necessarily on an individual case by case basis but in the coordination of social welfare and community services for migrants. The social workers’ professionalism and ability to approach individual migrant problems in context, and with compassion, fed into their coordinating role. The interplay between the social workers’ casework approach and their professional impetus to coordinate support services is crucial to an understanding of the wider context of postwar migrant assimilation. The works of Jordens and Lawrence go a long way in acknowledging the efforts of social workers amongst migrants during the 1950s. However, both conclude that the large volumes of migrant casework negated any real achievements in migrant social welfare and, according to Lawrence, threatened the professionalism of postwar Australian social work.<sup>10</sup> John Murphy takes this argument one step further in his study of 1950s Australian society, stating that not only were social workers preoccupied with individual casework, they failed to recognise or challenge the wider political framework in which they were operating.<sup>11</sup> This thesis refutes Murphy’s claim by examining more closely the individual and coordinating actions of departmental social workers in the field of migrant assimilation to reveal the ways and means by which they did affect change in 1950s Australia, often in the face of considerable difficulties. An examination of the coordinating role of the Department’s Social Welfare Section and the activities of its individual social workers returns us to the nuanced premise of this thesis – the misinterpretation of assimilationist policy as singularly dogmatic

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<sup>9</sup> Wickramasinghe, ‘Out of Mind,’ 41

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence, *Professional Social Work*, 70; Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 58-59.

<sup>11</sup> John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties*, 16.

implementation rather than as responsive negotiation of policy and need leads to a skewed understanding of the period.

Anthony McMahon's analysis of fifty years of the journal of the Australian Association of Social Work, *Australian Social Work*, from 1947 to 1999, confirms what Jordens, Wickramasinghe and Lawrence allude to: that Australian social workers were focused on 'empathetic intervention or addressing individual oppression without much concern for oppressive social structures'.<sup>12</sup> McMahon concludes from his survey of professional writings that Australian social workers reflected 'uncritically the social policies of the day whether they were assimilation or multiculturalism' and that 'hardly any of the articles challenged the policy or political contexts in which practice was taking place'.<sup>13</sup> McMahon does, however, acknowledge that the social workers' approach generally 'emphasised agency, diversity, resilience, resistance and power' while being 'couched in the languages of cultural sensitivity and anti-racism'. As we will see, it was this approach, underpinning social welfare's professionalism, that became crucial to the social workers' efforts towards migrants during the 1950s, revealing the subtle ways in which the profession challenged the status quo. Again, if we only examine the activities of departmental social workers from a top-down approach we get a skewed understanding of what actually happened at this time. This chapter differs from other approaches by examining process, the interplay between government, department, agency, and migrant groups to gain a broader understanding of what took place at all levels of society during the assimilationist period.

While in the context of assimilation, gains made in the area of migrant social welfare by departmental social workers in 1950s Australia were significant, it must be acknowledged that services were far from adequate and would remain so for some time.<sup>14</sup> At a very practical level, the small number of departmental social workers employed lends itself to the arguments of Wickramasinghe, Jordens and Lawrence. In 1949 the Department of Immigration provided for the employment of thirty-nine social workers within the Social Welfare Section. However, Jordens reveals that by 1951 there had never been more than thirty employed at any one

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<sup>12</sup> Anthony McMahon, 'Writing Diversity: Ethnicity and race in Australian social work, 1947-1997,' *Australian Social Work* 55 (September, 2002), 177.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 178, 180.

<sup>14</sup> See Wickramasinghe, 'Out of Mind'.

time.<sup>15</sup> This small band of departmental social workers was concentrated in the larger cities of Sydney and Melbourne, and in the migrant processing and holding centres where sizeable transitory migrant populations existed. The more regional states of Tasmania and South Australia had no more than one and three departmental social workers respectively employed at any one time. When compared to the scope of Australia's postwar immigration program, which brought in one million migrants by 1956, it becomes clear that the numerically small number of professional social workers employed by the Department of Immigration was vastly inadequate. Yet, despite their small numbers, these departmental social workers positioned themselves to advocate for migrants, coordinate new and existing services, educate the department on the needs of migrants, and ultimately used their unique position to coordinate services and effect change.

While case work was integral to the profession's approach to social welfare, postwar departmental social workers were uniquely placed as government employees working within the community to advance the coordination efforts necessary to affect policy change for migrants. A detailed examination of the sources reveals the social workers' ability to balance their individual casework loads with a growing responsibility for coordination of community services and information sharing within an assimilationist framework. Ultimately the experience of individual social workers within the Department of Immigration reveals the ways and means by which the profession established and fostered relationships with government and community bodies. What resulted was the kind of social and administrative collaboration that we first saw in Chapter One, with the ACCs, and will continue to see throughout the thesis in the form of organised social welfare as well as community bodies.

As we will see throughout this chapter, a thorough analysis of the professionalism, the casework approach, and the coordinating role of departmental social workers in the field of migrant settlement and assimilation during the 1950s affords us a more comprehensive picture of the social and administrative cooperation and dialogue that energised this crucial moment in Australia's immigration history.

### **The sources**

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<sup>15</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 44.

This chapter examines the monthly and annual reports of the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section during the years 1949-54. Monthly and annual reports of state based departmental social workers, as well as a series of special reports compiled nationally by the Social Welfare Section, reveal key areas of migrant welfare in the early years of the immigration program. These include problems associated with migrants living in remote areas, as well as the incidence of mental illness, marital and employment problems amongst migrants. Special reports reflecting the numerically high caseloads surrounding these problems were compiled from the numerous monthly and annual casework reports forwarded to Canberra in the years 1950 to 1951, on the initiative of the Social Welfare Section. I discovered the vast majority of this material in the Canberra office of the National Archives of Australia where it had an archival status of 'not yet examined' since being deposited there.<sup>16</sup>

The evidence reveals that the primary function of departmental social workers was casework: dealing with the migration, settlement and assimilation needs of new migrants. The scope of their work was vast and their monthly and annual reports offer evidence of the social workers' ability to develop, in a relatively short period of time, an understanding of the practical and personal problems associated with migration and settlement in a foreign country, and to recognise and appreciate the cultural differences of migrants from the dominant political and social order of the day. We have noted that the Social Welfare Section was short lived, with the government drastically cutting its numbers in the early 1960s.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the social welfare team, under the leadership of Hazel Dobson, provided valuable ameliorative services to migrants coping with settlement and adjustment issues in Australia for over a decade. The social workers' importance lies in the volume, scope and impact of their work over a relatively short but intense period of migrant settlement in postwar Australia, and in their struggles to initiate long-term sustainable support structures for migrants living in the community.

The examined correspondence between Hazel Dobson, state-based Commonwealth social workers, and Departmental Secretary, Tasman Heyes, gives clear insight into the level of understanding and compassion emanating from the department itself. This insight goes far

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<sup>16</sup> The only exception to this was a National Archives of Australia scholar, Ann-Mari Jordens, who had unparalleled access to all Departmental files for a research project in the early 1990s, culminating in her book *Alien to Citizen*. Files accessed by Jordens were not reclassified and remained 'not yet examined'.

<sup>17</sup> Minister (Sir) Alexander Downer reasoned that the Section had outlived its original purpose of dealing with displaced persons. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 151-152.

beyond the official assimilationist discourse of the day and provides a very early example of the valuable dialogue between government, community and voluntary groups to the benefit of migrants. While the Department of Immigration appeared indifferent and removed from the problems of individual migrants, an examination of the social welfare files shows a clear level of compassion and knowledge on the part of departmental officers that was not outwardly evident at the time, nor, it would appear, to historians subsequently. This departmental approach was in large measure due to the diligent work and knowledgeable and detailed reports of the departmental social workers themselves. And while their understanding and compassion was not always reflected in departmental policy in the 1950s, it did contribute to a pattern of social and administrative collaboration which eventually led to a greater understanding of the institutional and social needs of migrants.

This chapter will explore four key issues dealt with by departmental social workers: marital discord and tensions arising from inter-ethnic unions, employment difficulties endemic to the immigration program, problems of rural isolation, and incidences of mental illness amongst migrants. Identified early at a national level by Dobson, these issues were brought to the attention of the department in 1951. The efforts of individual social workers to address these problems through a professional approach to casework offer a considered and personal insight into the immigration program. This perspective, garnered from individual social welfare reports, remains largely invisible in official departmental documents and correspondence concerning the policy of migrant assimilation. Furthermore, the social welfare reports indicate that the Minister for Immigration and other departmental officials were well apprised of the difficult situations encountered by migrants, but that ultimately bureaucratic channels were slow to respond. Nonetheless, the ill-defined policy of assimilation resulted in a variety of pragmatic interpretations and implementations of social welfare policy towards migrants during the 1950s. The files examined bear witness to a variety of interpretations of assimilation within the Social Welfare Section and place the work of departmental social workers in the broader context of the postwar immigration program.

### **Marital Casework: the beginnings of professionalism and a contextual approach**

Marital problems among migrants were an early concern of departmental social workers, and required a degree of cooperation between voluntary bodies and the Social Welfare Section of

the Department of Immigration. The evidence suggests that legacies of war, displacement and the emigration process itself, all recurring themes in departmental social welfare casework, were major causes of marital difficulties among migrants in Australia. Language barriers, cultural and national differences, family loyalties, and the pressures of assimilation were also factors contributing to the marital discord of many migrants. Along with these uniquely migrant-related problems, departmental social workers also encountered many commonplace marital problems in their case work. The social workers' approach to migrant marital problems is representative of their professionalism and their attention to detail through the casework approach. Their reports demonstrate this again and again, showing their ability to assess needs on a case by case basis. For example Victorian social worker Linda Dickson wrote in 1950, 'possibly years of constant moving and camp life have broken down any desire for stability in relationships', concluding that this had affected migrants' ideas of commitment, resulting in 'a desire to abandon any arrangement which proved irksome'.<sup>18</sup> The Social Welfare Section developed some of its earliest relationships with existing community groups and organisations in an effort to combat the marital problems experienced by these migrants. Social workers relied heavily, for example, on various church organisations for referral of cases and also sought them out for the provision of general marital counselling.<sup>19</sup>

Marital problems were by far the most complicated migrant problems referred to social workers until the mid-1950s. Senior South Australian Social Worker Hilda Wilson reported in 1951 that, while not numerically dominant,<sup>20</sup> 'marital problems have been among the most difficult to handle'.<sup>21</sup> This sort of casework involved an intense 'hands-on' approach to an intrinsically human problem, exacerbated in the case of migrants by the trauma of war, displacement and emigration. This situation led one New South Wales Social Worker, Miss Lyons, to report by October 1950 that 'much general marriage counselling has been necessary'.<sup>22</sup> Social workers made repeated requests to Canberra for better migrant accommodation arrangements to help alleviate family and marital problems, as many early

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<sup>18</sup> NAA: A437/1, 1949/6/382, Victorian Annual Reports, Dickson monthly report October 1950, 4.

<sup>19</sup> McMahon argues that the role of religious institutions, especially Catholic, has been largely ignored in Australian social welfare historiography. See McMahon, 'Redefining the Beginnings of Social Work in Australia,' paper given at the Australian Association of Social Work and Welfare Education Conference, Perth, Western Australia, 29 September-2 October 2002, 1-5.

<sup>20</sup> Health, employment, and accommodation problems were all higher than marital problems in sheer case load numbers. See Appendix 3 for breakdown of caseloads, esp. 3.1.

<sup>21</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/4. South Australian Annual Reports, Report of Hilda Wilson year ending June 1951, 1.

<sup>22</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/2. New South Wales Annual Reports, 1949-50 Annual Report, 2.

cases involved the stress of family separation due to work placement. In 1951 Tasmanian social worker, John Tarbath, outlined the various marital problems he had encountered in Tasmania, suggesting that ‘from an assimilation aspect, it is emphasised that the unity of the family tends to have a stabilizing influence giving added emotional security and very often increases working efficiency’. In this same report Tarbath expanded on the problem: ‘Whilst the accommodation shortage remains the number of cases of marital discord will continue to increase.’<sup>23</sup> However, accommodation issues continued to impact on the marital harmony of migrants. Two years later Lyons reported on the situation in New South Wales:

Almost invariably poor housing conditions make reconciliation impossible. Families living in single rooms and paying extortionate rents, or living in garages with few conveniences find that tempers fray and serious domestic troubles result.

Lyons appealed to Canberra for a solution, suggesting that ‘some consideration be given to the conversion of Hostels to family units similar to those provided by the Housing Commission’.<sup>24</sup> Thus, again, a pragmatic approach to a complex problem was pursued, with the social workers’ professional methodology derived from their individual casework experiences with postwar migrants.

Social workers highlighted a particular grouping of marital problems that were of concern to them, those they defined as ‘inter-racial’ marriages. In these cases the stress of migration and earlier displacement and the trauma of war were exacerbated by a myriad of cultural, national, economic and familial forces. These so called ‘inter-racial’ marriages, unions between migrants of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, signalled to the social worker the need for deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the national and cultural differences of migrants. In Melbourne, for example, there were documented cases of discord arising from the union of Polish and German migrants. It was reported by the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in Melbourne, who provided marriage counselling to migrants, that:

As the years of marriage passed the interpersonal strife between the partners sometimes was aggravated and deepened by an awareness that their two peoples had been at war with each other, whereas earlier on the couple’s love for each other had been able to neutralise this influence.

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<sup>23</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/6. Tasmanian Annual Reports, Report of John Tarbath, 1951, 5.

<sup>24</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/2. Annual Report, 1952-53, 2.



The Bureau further observed that often in such cases the two partners had consciously exploited these national conflicts.<sup>25</sup> Thus early instances of marital discord highlighted the necessity of addressing migrant problems on a case by case basis, customising social welfare services along cultural and ethnic lines.

Possibly the most striking issue surrounding the social workers' thinking on social policy in regard to marital problems was that of the migration process itself. Reports forwarded to Canberra maintained that the displacement and migration processes accounted for the majority of marital problems they were encountering. Many marriages between newly arrived migrants had been contracted while one or both were living in Displaced Persons camps throughout Europe. According to departmental social welfare casework reports, these marriages were all too often marriages of convenience hastily contracted with no real common ground or recognition of the actual responsibilities of the individuals involved. Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia all reported similar findings in a special report written in 1951. Social worker Dyson of Western Australia emphasised that it was 'quite possible that many such marriages have been contracted during the New Australian's stay in Germany', concluding that this led to a 'lack of any basic common ground, or real desire to make the marriage successful'.<sup>26</sup> In New South Wales this pattern was also evident, with one social worker observing that there was 'usually a history of maladjustment in Europe' and that sometimes this situation became 'aggravated by the separation of husband and wife on arrival'.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in Tasmania, Tarbath reported that 'a deeper examination of the problem reveals only too frequently an inadequate knowledge of the other partner – "We met in a camp, or he came to work in the town where I was living and we were married after a few weeks"'.<sup>28</sup> Thus departmental social workers identified these early cases as resulting from conditions peculiar to the situation of Displaced Persons in Europe. Their early reports reveal again the social workers' professional approach to individual casework amongst migrants and an early recognition of the differing needs of migrants on a case by case basis.

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<sup>25</sup> Norma Parker, ed., *Focus on Migrants: A Social Work Perspective* (Sydney: Australian Council of Social Services, 1973), 80. Norma Parker was one of Australia's first professionally trained social workers.

<sup>26</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/7. Social Welfare - Special Problems, Marital, 1950 – 1951, Western Australian excerpt; A445/1, 276/3/2. New South Wales Annual Report 1950-51.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/6. Annual Report of John Tarbath, 1952, 5.

The marital problems so keenly felt among the Displaced Persons community in Australia provide an interesting intersection with the German migrant experience in postwar Australia. Repeated concerns over marital problems in every state prompted Dobson to compile a special report on marital problems in 1951.<sup>29</sup> The New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian components of this report all mentioned instances of marital unions between female German nationals and male Displaced Persons, usually contracted during the Displaced Persons' time in Germany after the war. As early as 1949 in South Australia, social worker Graeme Hunter observed the following:

It appears that in many instances these women have married persons of Displaced Person status solely in order to leave their fatherland. Upon arrival here they have left their husbands, sometimes on a pretext but often without.

Hunter went on to report that the effect of this situation on the husband had been that 'they felt so greatly humiliated that they toyed with the idea of suicide'.<sup>30</sup> In the same year New South Wales social worker Lyons reported similar experiences, stating that these cases were 'much more serious' than the general marriage counselling of Displaced Person unions. She added:

Frequently these women appear to be of superior intelligence to their husbands, and often assert their social superiority. There is little to be done in these cases but to assist the husband in accepting the situation.<sup>31</sup>

The following year, it was reported in Victoria that while cases had diminished, there were 'still a few German wives of DPs who appear to have merely used their marital status as a means of emigrating from Europe'.<sup>32</sup> These observations on DP and German unions are borne out by the available data. Jean Martin cites some 7,000 German women who came to Australia as wives of DPs.<sup>33</sup> For the social worker, while the specific experience of German and DP casework was not representative of the broader area of marital casework, the example does provide early evidence of the social workers' professionalism, attention to detail, and the casework approach. Furthermore the evidence reveals early recognition on the part of departmental social workers that migrant needs differed on a case by case basis, which in turn validated their casework approach.

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<sup>29</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/7.

<sup>30</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Annual Report of G Hunter, 1949-50, 3.

<sup>31</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/2. Annual Report of Lyons, 1949-1950, 2.

<sup>32</sup> NAA: A437/1, 1949/6/382. Victorian Report of Dickson, October 1950, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Jean Martin used sample data supplied to her by JJ Zubrzycki between 1947 and 1952 to estimate that 7,000 German women had come to Australia as wives of Displaced Persons. This equates to nearly 10 per cent of all male Displaced Persons having a German wife. Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, 93, footnote 7.

The experience of Tasmanian social worker Tarbath offers further evidence of the validity of the casework approach to migrant marital problems. In his 1952 annual report, Tarbath cited six instances of marital discord where German wives of DPs ‘appeared to have originated from a higher social status than that of their husbands’.<sup>34</sup> Tarbath stated pragmatically and without judgement: ‘Some marriages were frankly marriages of convenience without any semblance of a bond of affection and merely an avenue of escape from war torn Europe.’<sup>35</sup> The evidence suggests there was no ill feeling on the part of the social worker towards the German women in question. In the case of many German wives of DPs the social workers acknowledged that the basic recognition of the responsibilities of marriage was not present from the outset. It was a pre-existing problem which had no direct bearing on the migration, settlement, or assimilation processes and so departmental social workers recognised the need for a more contextualised approach. There was no genuine expectation of salvaging the marital bond; it became simply a process of helping the partners adjust to their single lives in Australia. As is evident in other areas of their casework, the social workers repeatedly demonstrated an ability to address the problems they encountered in context. The example of early marital casework amongst migrants demonstrates the social workers’ professionalism and compassionate approach amidst a climate of bureaucracy and assimilationist rhetoric. As we will see, these practical and value-oriented qualities surfaced time and again as departmental social workers amassed a large body of casework experience during the 1950s.

After 1952 there was little specific mention of German marital cases in the reports of the Social Welfare Section. This could almost certainly be attributed to the drying up of the Displaced Persons migration scheme. As can be seen in Appendix 1, the West German Assisted Passage Agreement, which began in 1952, was targeted towards young married couples and families.<sup>36</sup> Thus 1952 marks a shift in the type of German migrant arriving in Australia, and hence the nature of related social welfare casework. For these assisted migrants, although arguably also traumatised and displaced by the aftermath of the Second World War, there was no impetus to marry hastily in order to secure passage to Australia.<sup>37</sup> While marital

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<sup>34</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/6. Annual Report of John Tarbath 1951, 5.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, Annual Report of John Tarbath, 1952, 5.

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 1 for a discussion of the demographics of the West German Assisted Passage migration scheme, esp. Appendix 1.3.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix 1.4 for further discussion of dislocation due to war of both German citizens and ethnic Germans.

problems among German migrants still remained, after 1952 their causal factors were comparable with the wider body of marital casework, namely the process of migration, separation of families, language and cultural differences, ill-treatment and neglect, housing conditions, assimilation pressures, financial problems, and a general feeling of hopelessness.<sup>38</sup> Thus departmental social workers' early casework experiences with German wives of DPs gave way to general marital casework from 1952, and assisted German migrants began settling in Australia in an environment more geared towards migrant reception and support than it had been in 1947.

### **Employment Casework: agency and method**

Migrant employment was fundamentally linked to the Australian Government's postwar program of immigration. It was the pillar around which the entire immigration scheme had been built. Postwar policy was explicit in its goal of populating, expanding and building the nation through migration. As a result, most postwar migrants, Germans included, were recruited on two-year work contracts that, in essence, produced a large, malleable body of directable labour. While Australia experienced full employment in the postwar period, downturns in the economy in 1952 and 1956 had repercussions for Australian citizens and migrants alike. This, coupled with deficiencies in the two-year migrant contract system, resulted in departmental social workers identifying employment problems as their main body of casework by 1952. As with most of their early casework, social workers identified many employment problems as endemic to the migration and settlement process itself, thus falling within the domain of the Social Welfare Section.

This large body of directable labour was essentially managed by the Commonwealth Employment Services (CES). Established in 1945 as a division of the Department of Labour and National Service, the CES was responsible for the placement of migrants within essential industries. While appropriately equipped to deal with the logistics of work placement, the CES was less able and less willing to consider the social and financial implications of this for migrants. In stark contrast to the Social Welfare Section, the CES was essentially a people-processing institution which mainly administered 'statutory benefits and made little, if any,

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<sup>38</sup> See Gerard Dowling, 'Marriage Counselling with Migrants,' in Parker, *A Social Work Perspective*, 78-83.

attempt to alter client behaviour'.<sup>39</sup> Its manpower policy during the postwar decade was to 'match workers with jobs and so promote labour mobility by providing information about available jobs'.<sup>40</sup> As we will see, in practice its attitudes towards migrants were rigid and its provision of information on services available was found lacking. Social worker reports present a picture of CES officers acting contrary to the best interests of migrants, with a view merely to placing workers in jobs as opposed to matching workers with jobs. The CES's interests lay in the end goal of achieving work placement; it was not concerned with aiding the migrant to overcome issues associated with the suitability of this placement.<sup>41</sup>

The role of the CES was outlined in a ministerial issued by Calwell in 1947 which stated that the CES had 'undertaken to co-operate in placing European migrants in employment'. The ministerial went further to argue that CES officers would have 'no difficulty in securing suitable employment with a minimum of delay for all the displaced persons' because of the government's selection criteria based on labour requirements.<sup>42</sup> Nor was the CES concerned in taking real steps to improve retention rates of migrants. Jordens cites a Tasmanian example of a migrant with engineering qualifications and experience in a canning factory. Initially placed in unrelated employment, this migrant took up extra work in a local canning factory where he could apply his skills more appropriately. An approach to the CES by the new employer and the migrant for his permanent relocation was denied. Insisting that he return to his original job, the CES applied for a deportation order when the migrant did not comply.<sup>43</sup> Similar views of stubborn and obstinate CES officers are found in departmental social worker reports between 1949 and 1954.

Social workers accused CES officers of approaching migrant problems in a vacuum, showing little consideration for the migrants themselves and instead focusing their efforts wholly on the strictest enforcement of the two-year work contract with little scope for flexibility. Both the government and the CES failed to recognise the need for an interdisciplinary approach in these early years, but after almost a decade of social welfare observations and work with migrants this need had become increasingly clear to all involved. As we will see the activities of

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<sup>39</sup> MA Jones, *The Australian Welfare State: Growth, crisis and change* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), 82.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 212.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence, *Professional Social Work*, 159.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, 38-39.

<sup>43</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 91.

departmental social workers demonstrate an understanding of the interrelatedness of migrant employment problems as being the culmination of other less tangible problems endemic to the migration and settlement process. Dobson articulated this in a report to the department in 1957, writing that migrant casework was so interrelated that ‘many cases with major problem listed as “medical”, “physical”, “financial”, etc., are also unemployed’. Dobson cited a South Australian example where

a large percentage of their cases listed under the heading ‘financial’ are also unemployed, whilst the Social Worker in Hobart had 30 unemployed psychiatrics included in his total of 123 unemployed persons for 10 months.<sup>44</sup>

Hence it fell largely to the Social Welfare Section to deal with the social and financial problems resulting from migrant employment difficulties. This early awareness of the need for an interdisciplinary and inter-departmental approach to addressing migrant problems is symptomatic of the wider approach of the Social Welfare Section during the 1950s.

Given the need for an interdisciplinary approach and the administrative and logistical nature of work placement, the CES was ill equipped to deal with the many causes of unemployment problems facing their clients. A fundamental dichotomy of agency and method existed between the CES and the Department of Immigration’s Social Welfare Section. For this reason social workers were placed under a heavy burden to address such problems, a burden made heavier by the initial reluctance of the CES to collaborate with them. Jordens highlights instances of the CES’s outright refusal to listen to the needs of migrants.<sup>45</sup> Although the administrative structure of the CES provided for the employment of state based social workers to assist in dealing with migrant problems related to employment, this was hardly acted upon.<sup>46</sup> Thus it fell to the social worker not only to address migrant employment problems, but also to campaign for greater understanding, insight and cooperation between the two departments.

In the course of their daily casework, departmental social welfare officers had numerous dealings with the CES from 1949 onwards. However, issues of migrant employment were first brought to the Department of Immigration’s attention a year earlier by Dobson. In 1948

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<sup>44</sup> NAA: A445, 276/2/4, Social Welfare. Special problems. Employment, 1952 – 1957. Report of Hazel Dobson, ‘Social Welfare Special Problems – Employment, 1957’, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 90-91.

<sup>46</sup> See Lawrence, *Professional Social Work*, 159. However, they did employ one social worker in each state of New South Wales and Victoria to deal with disabled clients. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 46

Dobson visited Queensland with the express aim of assessing the assimilation of former displaced persons. Secretary Heyes explained:

As part of our general education and assimilation of aliens we are arranging for trained social workers to make personal contact with aliens who have been resident in the Commonwealth for a long time, particularly those who have congregated in settlements, without so far making any effort to assimilate.<sup>47</sup>

Dobson exceeded her brief, in essence revealing to the Department the benefits that could accrue from the involvement of social workers in the field of migrant settlement and assimilation. In correspondence with the CES, Heyes noted that while Dobson was given specific instructions not to pay too much attention to recent arrivals, 'it would appear from her report that certain matters came directly under her notice and she evidently thought it her duty to bring them to the notice of this office'.<sup>48</sup> Dobson had given weight to a social welfare issue she believed needed special attention - that of the employment of women cooks on cane fields - and commented on the necessity of providing social welfare services to all recent arrivals. Dobson had spoken with all parties involved and proceeded to outline the problem to Heyes and Minister Holt in Canberra. She wrote that in her opinion it was inappropriate to employ such women on the cane fields because it was a gross mis-allocation of resources and the women would be better utilised elsewhere. She proffered the opinion that worker productivity would increase if more suitable cooks were employed to cater for the men. This report set a precedent for departmental and social worker relations in the 1950s, with the practical application of assistance and advice designed to increase both the productivity of the migrant workers and the success of the immigration program in general. In highlighting the problems of migrants Dobson, and eventually her team of social workers, advanced a pragmatic policy of identifying and dealing with social welfare issues within an immigration and assimilationist framework in postwar Australia.

Dobson's report was the first instance of official criticism of the placement procedures of the CES in relation to postwar migrants. It is important because this took place before the formal establishment of the Social Welfare Section.<sup>49</sup> Dobson went on to become the head of this Section in 1949, a role she filled for over a decade until 1961. This example demonstrates the initial gulf between departmental policy and the pragmatic approach of the Social Welfare

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<sup>47</sup> NAA: B550, 1948/23/4096, Displaced Persons - reports by Social Workers. Letter to CES Sydney from Heyes, 19 August 1948.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, Hazel Dobson, Report, 1948.

Section, a disparity that largely dissipated over the course of the next ten years. In reality, what Dobson did was to bring to the attention of the department the plight of the newly arrived DPs and to illustrate the benefits to the assimilation programme of providing social welfare services from the outset. This early work, and the reports compiled for the department by Dobson, were instrumental in instigating the establishment of the Social Welfare Section.<sup>50</sup> Dobson's no nonsense approach to reporting her findings alerted the department to the valuable and early contribution social workers could make to the assimilation process at every stage.

The social worker reports clearly showed that unemployment among migrants was not in itself an exclusive problem, but rather, it was the result of a myriad of less visible problems that were caused by the process of migration and settlement itself. The main problems identified by Dobson's social workers as leading to employment difficulties included but were not limited to: a lack of English language skills; non-recognition of trade qualifications; misinformation before embarkation; racism and discrimination; difficulties of transport; prejudiced employment officers; financial needs; separation of families; general attitudes of Australian employers, employees and the trade unions; and physical and mental disability. General migrant dissatisfaction with employment was also a contributing factor. A 1950-51 annual report outlines the main causes of migrant dissatisfaction in New South Wales namely, a desire to earn more money, the distance of job from domicile, a desire to work in previous trade or profession, boredom or restlessness, difficulties with other employees or employers through language or customs, objections to joining trade unions and claims that health was in some way affected by the working conditions.<sup>51</sup> These interrelated issues formed the basis of the social workers' understanding of migrant employment difficulties.

Financial difficulties and the subsequent need for overtime were two very common reasons for a migrant's desire to transfer employment. One departmental social worker in Canberra observed that while such influencing factors clearly needed to be taken into consideration, these employment issues were 'never treated sympathetically by the employment officers'.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 33-34 for a succinct summary of Dobson's initial 1948 research report from which the Department of Immigration acknowledged the need for professional social workers to deal with migrant problems.

<sup>51</sup> NAA: A445, 276/2/4. Social Welfare Special Problems, Employment, Miss Lyons Annual Report 1950-51, 2.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, excerpts from Canberra reports.



This sentiment mirrored that of Hunter who also believed that CES officers had not approached migrant concerns in the spirit expected of them. He reported in 1950 that it was not uncommon to hear CES officers remark that, ‘I never believe anything those migrants say’. Hunter viewed this as an impediment to dealing with and successfully placing migrants in appropriate employment. Hunter also expressed concern over CES officers’ growing useage of the term ‘arrogant’ in relation to migrants. Hunter warned of the damage this was doing to the assimilation program: ‘The increasing usage of this term suggests the development of a stereotyped conception of a New Australian character and in some ways appears to be connected with the old idea of “arrogant Prussians”.’ Clearly, stereotypical views were not an aid to mutual understanding and respect. Hunter did concede, however, that CES officers’ tempers were bound to wear thin when dealing with large numbers of migrants every day who were ‘seeking changes on any pretext’. This was especially so given that CES officers were public servants with no specialised training or educational backgrounds to equip them with the necessary tools for dealing with the wide-ranging social problems of migrants. Regardless, Hunter remained of the opinion that CES officers had a duty to be compassionate and treat individual problems on their merits, if migrant assimilation was to be successfully achieved. This approach was influenced in no small part by Hunter’s professional training as a social worker. Taking a hard line, Hunter warned, would lead to unproductive and maladjusted New Australians who consequently would have no impetus to assimilate and would therefore not be in a position to contribute to and enrich Australian postwar society.<sup>53</sup>

Hunter’s solution was to encourage cooperation and liaison between personnel from the Department of Immigration and the CES. His monthly report concluded that ‘without practical co-operation at a maximum level, the general problems of migrant assimilation and attendant to that, the welfare of New Australians are in many instances aggravated and made more difficult of solution’. Hunter furthered his point by quoting Secretary Heyes who, establishing the guiding principles of the Social Welfare Section, had said that it was:

particularly necessary in the case of these newcomers that each individual should be treated as a whole person and not as a series of

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<sup>53</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/4. Seven page report of Hunter, February 1950, 5. The importance of migrant employment is further emphasised by the German migrant case study in Appendix 1. The Migrant Database tells us that the overwhelming motivation for postwar German migrants settling in South Australia was employment opportunity. Thus, as well as the financial and attendant difficulties brought about by employment problems, for South Australia’s German migrant community employment was a factor in its adjustment and settlement (and hence assimilation) into Australian society. See Appendix 1.8.

isolated problems to be dealt with in unconnected fashion by a number of different organisations and Departments.<sup>54</sup>

Thus the Social Welfare Section's early contact with migrant employment problems, and hence with the CES, is representative of the profession's wider philosophy and professional approach to casework. Departmental social workers provided attention to detail, addressing individual migrant problems within their casework model of assistance. Furthermore the example of migrant employment problems demonstrates the social workers' willingness to comment on the broader immigration program as it affected their clients, resulting, in this instance, in practical improvements in interdepartmental cooperation.

In 1952 Dobson circulated to the department a special report on unemployed migrants, highlighting the fact that many were unaware of services available to them, including the existence of unemployment benefits.<sup>55</sup> She expressed her displeasure over some employment officers who had informed social workers that it was 'not their job to tell migrants about Unemployment Benefits and that they simply ask them to call again in a week's time'.<sup>56</sup> As a result 'numbers of New Australians' went without financial support for weeks at a time. Dobson recounted a personal story from the Sydney office where a migrant had presented himself in a sorry state to the social worker. The man was unemployed and unaware of the benefits entitled him: 'The social worker gave him her own lunch. He "wolfed" it down'.<sup>57</sup> This report, in 1952, was the product of a cross-country trip where Dobson had taken the opportunity to discuss employment problems personally with departmental social workers in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. She reported that a lack of support structures exacerbated the problems of employment faced by many migrants, writing that many 'hard to place' migrants experienced hardship 'as the recent migrant seldom has a home, or friends to assist him over a difficult period'. Dobson further illustrated the unique employment problems of migrants with mental health disorders:

Medical Superintendents of Mental Hospitals have rung our Social Workers saying that certain psychiatric cases are now ready for discharge if sheltered employment can be found. Formerly the Social Worker arranged for light employment and accommodation, suitable to the individual's condition, through the cooperation of Labour and

<sup>54</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/4. Seven page report of Hunter, February 1950, 6.

<sup>55</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/4. Confidential report to Heyes from Hazel Dobson, 'Unemployed Migrants', 14 May 1952, 1.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

National Service. Now, however, the Social Workers are obliged to tell the Medical Superintendents that they can no longer help. The migrant therefore has to remain in the Mental Hospital.<sup>58</sup>

While individual interventions on behalf of migrants were successful in gaining them employment in the past, this approach was no longer possible given the sheer number of cases. Consequently, to counter the rising problems of unemployment and the indifference of CES officers, departmental social workers increasingly came to rely on the assistance of voluntary community organisations. In the first five years of the immigration program, social workers communicated with these voluntary organisations regarding leisure pursuits and cultural aspects of the assimilation process. By 1952, however, New South Wales senior social worker, Mrs Moffat, reported that:

The needs have been met with generosity within the limits of the [voluntary] organisations, but there is a strong feeling that the Commonwealth Government should find some means of providing for migrants brought into the country under its auspices. At a special meeting of relief giving agencies this view was reiterated by almost every representative, but it was readily admitted that special Government assistance to migrants was not possible, although the plight of the newcomer was more desperate and the unemployment had affected this section of the community most severely.<sup>59</sup>

This evidence is in stark contrast to the findings of McMahon in his analysis of the profession's journal *Australian Social Work*. As we recall, McMahon concluded that while social workers were very welcoming and tolerant of migrants, the journal 'tended to reflect uncritically the social policies of the day'.<sup>60</sup> Evidence by way of departmental social worker reports, however, reveals the small and subtle ways in which the Social Welfare Section did challenge the status quo.

Dobson informed Heyes that a 1952 meeting of the Australian Association of Social Workers had discussed the issue of migrant employment at length. This very real problem, she explained, was also being taken up by various community organisations such as the New Settlers League and the Good Neighbour Movement. Dobson expressed some concern upon learning that the situation in Melbourne was 'very grim' and that South Australia and Tasmania were similarly troubled. Her fear for Sydney was that the unemployment problem may 'explode at any time, and become a public issue'.<sup>61</sup> Dobson recognised that the

<sup>58</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/4. Confidential report to Heyes from Hazel Dobson, 'Unemployed Migrants,' 2.

<sup>59</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/2. NSW Annual Report, 1951-1952, 6.

<sup>60</sup> McMahon, 'Writing Diversity,' 178. This is perhaps not surprising given the relative youth of the profession.

<sup>61</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/4. Dobson, 'Unemployed Migrants', 2.

employment conditions were likely transitional but that something had to be done to mitigate the hardships experienced by migrants in the short term. Her immediate solution was to improve communication between migrants and the government. She suggested the insertion of an article in the *New Australian* newspaper informing migrants of the many social service benefits available to them, and for the Government to return extreme cases to migrant centres for re-allocation of employment.<sup>62</sup> Thus Dobson drew on personal experience and general knowledge garnered from the collective experiences of her social welfare officers to communicate her observations on migrant employment issues to the department. Offering specific examples and pragmatic solutions, and drawing on the efforts of third party organisations, Dobson's report exemplifies the sympathetic and coordinated approach to migrant settlement and assimilation that gradually emerged in postwar Australia.

Between 1951 and 1953, state-based social workers reported a growing cooperation between themselves and CES officers, to the point where cross-referral and cooperation was taking place. The state of Victoria, for example, reported in 1951 that there had developed a deeper understanding between the two departments, with District Employment Officers referring 'problems which are definitely social ones, and the old antipathy towards Social Workers has completely gone'.<sup>63</sup> This improvement was largely due to greater cooperation and understanding between social welfare and CES officers. New South Wales social worker, Miss Griffin, echoed this shift when she reported on the problems encountered with placement of female migrants in domestic jobs. She observed in 1951 that there were no longer any problems and that it appeared that 'much more sympathetic handling by the Commonwealth Employment Service of what was last year a very difficult problem, has caused this'.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly the NSW Senior Social Worker reported in May 1952 that:

all Social Workers are aware that straight out cases of employment difficulty must be referred to the Commonwealth Employment Service, and the relationship between Social Workers and Commonwealth Employment Service officers is excellent.<sup>65</sup>

In South Australia however, it was reported by social worker GT Cuddihy that in terms of 'hard to place' migrants, such as those they classified as physically and mentally handicapped, as well as widows with children, there had still been a 'failure of the Commonwealth

<sup>62</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/4. Dobson, 'Unemployed Migrants', 1-3.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, Employment excerpts, Victoria, 1951.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, Employment excerpts, NSW, Miss Griffin, 1950-51.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, Memo to CMO, Sydney, from NSW Senior Social Worker, 14 May 1952.

Employment Service to approach these problems in the spirit that was originally expected of them'.<sup>66</sup> Cuddihy also reported that the 1952-53 employment recession in South Australia had led to a marked change in employer outlook with 'not a small number of employers openly declaring that they were no longer interested in migrants'.<sup>67</sup> He concluded that although the employment situation had since improved, there were still many 'hard cases' with employment problems largely due to a 'failure by employers and Commonwealth Employment Service to recognise this fact and respond accordingly'.<sup>68</sup> While relations had improved between the two departments, due in part to the efforts of the Social Welfare Section, clearly economic conditions and individual personalities could revive old tensions.

The problem of recession and unemployment surfaced again in the 1956 to 1957 financial year as Australia suffered a steady downturn of its economy. Many of the public works programs had ceased and the various State and Commonwealth Railway bodies, employers of large numbers of migrants, were fully staffed.<sup>69</sup> A great number of unskilled migrants found it increasingly difficult to obtain employment. At this time South Australian social workers cited slightly more than one in seven cases listing employment as the major problem, which was lower than their New South Wales and Victorian counterparts, with one in four and one in three cases respectively.<sup>70</sup> While their first action was to coordinate migrants with the appropriate organisations, such as referring direct employment cases to the CES, departmental social workers continually found themselves intervening on an individual case by case basis. Whether to help with language difficulties in following up newspaper advertisements, supplying migrants with lists of employer contacts or, on occasion, making direct contact with employers on the migrants' behalf, Dobson's social workers pursued every path available to them.<sup>71</sup> Thus, regardless of the growing cooperation and cross-referral encouraged by the Social Welfare Section, as the decade wore on, Departmental social workers still found themselves plugging gaps in migrant settlement services on an individual case by case basis. However, in working towards a more cooperative approach, their interactions with the government, migrants and the CES, meant departmental social workers were able to effect change at a local level for individual migrants.

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<sup>66</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/4. Eight page Annual Report of Cuddihy, 1952-53, 6.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*, 5.

<sup>69</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 46.

<sup>70</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/4. Report on employment problems, Hazel Dobson, 1957, 1.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, 2.

The subtle shifts brought about by the social workers' hands-on provision of services to migrants are visible in many areas of the Social Welfare Sections' sphere of operation. Social workers had more than just interdepartmental hurdles to jump. Linguistic obstacles were clearly an everyday challenge in dealing with European migrants and the inadequacies of multilingual services to postwar migrants are well documented. However, the activities of departmental social workers to cater to non-English speaking European migrants demonstrate yet again the basic processes of cooperation, coordination and consultation developing around postwar migrant service provision. While some have argued that from a professional viewpoint language difficulties and the presence of interpreters prevented social workers from establishing rapport and trust with their migrant clients, it is clear from the evidence at hand that individual social workers did their best with limited resources.<sup>72</sup> They relied on their own language skills, those of paid interpreters, and extensive informal networks of voluntary migrant and Australian interpreters to communicate with non-English speaking European migrants. In New South Wales, one social worker spoke fluent French and German, while others taught themselves 'DP Deutsche'. Interpreters were employed in state offices and migrant holding centres for use by departmental social workers and by 1949 Melbourne had three full-time interpreters, each fluent in six languages, while the Sydney office had two.<sup>73</sup> This combined agency and community approach, while grossly inadequate to meet the sheer volume of casework involved, is nevertheless demonstrative of the Social Welfare Section's resourcefulness in drawing on migrant and community networks. It is an example of one of the ways in which assimilationist policy enabled personal agency, with individual social workers not only working tirelessly to meet the needs of migrants but in doing so establishing broader community networks of support for themselves and migrants. The social workers' approach to coordination and personal agency, while maintaining their professionalism, came to exemplify their work with migrants throughout the 1950s.

### **Isolated Rural Migrants: a model for coordination**

The unique problems of migrants settled in rural Australia also came to the attention of the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section. Lengthy reports reveal that country

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<sup>72</sup> Gerald Dowling, 'Marriage Counselling', in Parker, *Focus on Migrants*, 79.

<sup>73</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 35-36.

visits to isolated work camps and small towns were quite prevalent in the states of South Australia and Tasmania. Departmental social workers in these states recognised early the problems that resulted from settling migrants in remote areas. Both South Australia and Tasmania were early recipients of large groups of Special Project migrants, discussed at length later in the chapter, whom Jordens identified as ‘possibly the most disadvantaged immigrants in Australia’.<sup>74</sup> It was not feasible for social workers to maintain frequent or personal contact with these migrants, who were essentially recruited to isolated work environments.

The Adelaide office of the Social Welfare Section of the Department of Immigration had been established concurrently with the Canberra head office in June 1949. It took another seventeen months before social worker Cuddihy first travelled to rural South Australia to visit isolated migrants.<sup>75</sup> Cuddihy left for Murray Bridge and Mount Gambier on 15 November 1950. This ten day trip was the subject of a special report in which he stated that ‘The main purpose of this first visit to the Murray Bridge and Mt Gambier employment districts was to gain as good a general overall picture of the present position as possible in the time available’.<sup>76</sup> To this end Cuddihy spent most of his time interviewing employers and talking informally with employees at the workers’ camps. This included the South Australian Railways, the South Australian Farmers’ Union, regional hospitals and hotels, the Mount Gambier Woollen Mills, and the Woods and Forests Department. Cuddihy recorded approximately 1,200 migrants living in the Mount Gambier and Murray Bridge areas, all of whom had ‘similar problems to those of the alien living in metropolitan areas’, problems which ‘cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by letter’.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, Cuddihy suggested visits to remote areas be conducted on a regular basis, noting that while ‘the average New Australian is doing a reasonable job wherever they are placed’ the average Australian tolerates them but ‘will not go out of his way to make them feel at home’.<sup>78</sup>

The following month, in December 1950, Cuddihy again visited the South East region, including Wolseley, Frances, Naracoorte, Millicent, Snuggery, Mt Burr and Tailem Bend.

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<sup>74</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 92.

<sup>75</sup> Cuddihy travelled to regional areas by public transport between 1950 and 1952. Repeated requests for permission to hire a car or taxi were ignored by Canberra. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 85.

<sup>76</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Four page report of Cuddihy’s Trip to Murray Bridge and Mount Gambier 15-25 November 1950, 1.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*, 3.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*, 1.

Again, he met with employers and migrants in each town. In all he recorded thirty one cases requiring follow up action, as well as a large number of general enquiries. The immediate benefit of these trips was evident in the report:

Many of these people have various things on their minds and the fact that they can ask questions on the spot and receive an answer or a promise of further investigation on his behalf must help considerably.

Cuddihy also noted the benefit to employers, writing that they appeared to ‘like to discuss different aspects of the New Australians in their employ’, concluding that he thought ‘such discussions and visits must help to some extent in a better understanding of these people’.<sup>79</sup> Thus Cuddihy’s report suggests a benefit not only to the migrant requiring immediate social welfare support, but also to the ordinary Australians coming into daily contact with these migrants. As was seen in Chapter One, this educative role was an important feature of the government’s assimilation policy.

Early in 1951 Cuddihy made an initial visit to Port Lincoln, resulting in similarly beneficial contacts with organisations, employers and migrants in this region. The main employers he encountered were the South Australian Railways, the Engineering and Water Supply Department, the Electricity Trust of South Australia, and Cresco Fertilisers. Most of the migrant employees encountered in Port Lincoln were DPs. In a six-page report Cuddihy noted that the majority of problems were related to sub-standard living conditions and catering complaints. Cuddihy observed that in line with his other rural visits, ‘once again there appeared to be a complete lack of interest in English classes, to a large extent brought about by a lack of knowledge of the facilities available’.<sup>80</sup> Cuddihy sought to address this immediately during his visit, seeking interest from migrants in each town and work camp, and then discussing this with an officer from the Universities Commission. He also strongly encouraged the establishment of a GNC in the area to assist migrants and compensate for the absence of a full time social worker. He spoke with the Rotary Club, the Country Women’s Association, and the Lutheran, Catholic and Methodist Churches, all of whom ‘expressed themselves as interested and would like to hear further information regarding the activities of this [Good

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<sup>79</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Report on Welfare Officer’s Visit to South East 5-14 December 1950 by Cuddihy, 19 December 1950, 2.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*, Report on Welfare Officer’s visit to Port Lincoln Employment District on 2-12 April 1951, by Cuddihy, 24 May 1951, 4.



Neighbour] Council'.<sup>81</sup> Cuddihy recommended this be implemented as soon as possible, reasoning that while the general attitude encountered amongst most of the townspeople had been one of toleration, there was 'by no means a marked degree of acceptance'.<sup>82</sup> Cuddihy couched this in terms of its negative impact on the assimilation program, contending that in his experience 'tolerance' alone was not conducive to active involvement of migrants in the wider Australian community.<sup>83</sup> As we will see, to counter the disaffected attitude towards migrants in rural areas, commonwealth social workers such as Cuddihy became instrumental in facilitating early relationships between community organisations and the GNC of South Australia.<sup>84</sup> This coordinating role was a key feature of the Social Welfare Section throughout the 1950s.

Reflecting on the importance of his regional work, Cuddihy reported to his superiors in 1951 that 'visits to country areas did fill quite a big gap in the Assimilation programme'. Demonstrating his ability to perform a social welfare role based on the principles of his profession and within the confines of an assimilationist framework, Cuddihy peppered his report with humane, individual observations. His reports generally illustrate the importance of the Social Welfare Section's coordinating role in establishing local avenues of assistance for migrants.<sup>85</sup> Cuddihy evaluated this role in rural areas:

The visits besides being a direct contact with aliens were also a direct contact with many other interested people and organisations which brought the scheme into a more personal sphere which was a sharp contrast to the hitherto impersonal letter or telephone call.<sup>86</sup>

It becomes clear that the work of the social welfare officer was not only vested in individual casework, but in facilitating and establishing more sustainable avenues of assistance.<sup>87</sup> To

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<sup>81</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Report on Welfare Officer's visit to Port Lincoln Employment District on 2-12 April 1951, by Cuddihy, 24 May 1951, 5.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid*, 5.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*; see also NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13, Social Welfare Special Problems, country areas. Excerpts from six page report of Cuddihy's visit to Port Lincoln Employment District on 2-12 April 1951.

<sup>84</sup> As we will see in Chapter Five, the Social Welfare Section, and Dobson in particular, was responsible for the initiation of GNCs throughout Australia.

<sup>85</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Four page report by Cuddihy for year ending 30 June 1951, 4.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*, 4.

<sup>87</sup> This personal and humane touch with an emphasis on establishing sustainable community assistance for migrants is in stark contrast to more recent social welfare approaches in Britain, for example. There, social workers have become agents of the government, enforcing immigration policy and effectively spying for departments, rather than providing humane social welfare support to migrants and asylum seekers. With all its imperfections, Australia's approach to migrant social welfare in the 1950s was arguably more progressive than more recent international developments. See Beth Humphries, 'An Unacceptable Role for Social Work: Implementing Immigration Policy,' *British Journal of Social Work*, 34 (2004), 102-104.

achieve this Cuddihy utilised existing local community resources in conjunction with newer coordinating organisations such as the GNC of South Australia.

Another issue Cuddihy sought to resolve through this coordinating role was that of English language classes in rural areas. Cuddihy recognised in his 1951 annual report that rural isolation exacerbated language learning problems, citing a general lack of interest and enthusiasm on the part of the migrants as the reason for this. He reported that English language classes had not gained momentum in rural areas. Talking with migrants he discovered that the major problem was that classes were ‘for one standard only, which does not allow for the wide range between the more intelligent groups and those who are naturally slower to grasp a new language’. He further highlighted factors more specific to their rural and isolated context, writing that ‘perhaps the greatest single factor is that it is rather futile to attend a class for a few hours per week and for the remainder of the time converse in their native tongue’.<sup>88</sup> Uniquely placed to observe these issues first hand, and equally well positioned to follow them up through the appropriate channels, Cuddihy and his colleagues facilitated change in rural communities. To this end Cuddihy became involved in the initiation and sustainability of language classes in regional areas such as Port Lincoln, again demonstrating the coordinating role of the social worker at departmental and community levels to the benefit of migrants and likewise the government’s assimilationist aims.

Cuddihy’s fourth regional visit in a ten-month period was to Mount Gambier in September 1951. Nine months had passed since his initial visit to the area, during which time he noted a decline in the number of migrants there. He argued, however, that there were still significant numbers to warrant delivery of services to the area. In all, his second trip netted interviews with 122 migrants, with many more consulted in group interviews and discussions. Cuddihy observed that marital problems were increasing as more migrant families moved into country areas and ‘local people appear to find it very difficult to cope with such problems’. Cuddihy had explained to the local community that where possible ‘such cases should be dealt with as are ordinary Australians’ but that ‘difficulties peculiar to migrants invariably arise’. Cuddihy cited, for example, that while ordinary Australians usually had friends or relatives in the community to care for them temporarily, ‘where newcomers are concerned, this assistance is

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<sup>88</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Four page report of Cuddihy for year ending 30 June 1951, 2.

not always forthcoming, and consequently other avenues have to be explored'.<sup>89</sup> Cuddihy also brought to the department's attention a uniquely rural problem encountered by these migrants - that of financial problems related to health care. Unlike city-based public hospitals, services in country hospitals were not provided free of charge and consequently migrants were incurring large medical bills due to misunderstandings and a lack of communication. The senior physician at the Mount Gambier Hospital told Cuddihy that a high percentage of migrants admitted to country hospitals 'are not aware of and cannot understand the fact that they are expected to pay the costs of their hospitalisation'. Cuddihy's report identifies one source of this miscommunication: 'Most of these people are given pamphlets etc. stating that hospital treatment in Australia is free, which, of course, is fact as far as the Capital Cities are concerned'. Facilitating communication between the region and Canberra, Cuddihy forwarded a request from the country hospitals that the Department issue publicity outlining the fact that due to reduced government funding these hospitals must, out of financial necessity, issue a charge to all patients. Similarly on a previous trip to the South East Cuddihy had come across several migrant patients where 'application had not been made for Sickness Benefits'. There was no system in place to ensure hospitalised migrants lodged these applications, so Cuddihy had organised 'regular visits to be made to the wards' to ensure 'the necessary forms are supplied and forwarded to Commonwealth Social Services Department'.<sup>90</sup> Cuddihy's pragmatic approach reveals a degree of personal agency not often attributed to departmental social workers.

During his time in the Mount Gambier area Cuddihy also perceived a lack of understanding on the part of the Australian community towards the extracurricular and social needs of migrants in remote areas. He observed that these rural communities were either unaware of or apathetic towards the plight of such migrants:

Most of the people spoken to do not appear to comprehend the fact that under present conditions they offer nothing to the single man after he concludes his day's work, and further that many of them are well-separated from the larger towns. Even those living near towns find a large degree of rejection by the local townspeople.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13. Three page report of Cuddihy's visit to Mt Gambier 9-26 September 1951, 15 October 1951, 1.

<sup>90</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13. Report of Welfare Officer's visit to South East 5-14 December 1950, 2.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, three page report of Cuddihy's visit to Mt Gambier 9-26 September 1951, 15 October 1951.

Cuddihy's approach to this problem was to appeal to the four branches of the GNC of South Australia that had been established in the area since his last visit. Acknowledging that they were still in their infancy and 'looking for a more definite lead from their Head Office', Cuddihy believed that the GNC was still best placed to mitigate problems of acceptance and engagement by townspeople at a local, grass roots level.<sup>92</sup>

As early in the immigration program as 1951 the work of one solitary South Australian social worker, Cuddihy, had served to identify, document, and bring to departmental attention the less than desirable position of migrants in rural areas. Specifically Cuddihy had also documented the experience of German Special Project migrants. It was clear to Cuddihy, as a result of his professional training, that such migrants would not make a satisfactory social adjustment to a new life in Australia without some semblance of artificial assistance and intervention, a coordinated approach incorporating the Department of Immigration, social workers, GNCs, and local communities. Cuddihy believed in the importance of personal case work in aiding migrant assimilation and settlement, impressing its benefits on the department: 'The fact that personal contact may be made with the person and other local people makes the handling of such cases much easier and more effective than when attempted by the long range process from the Adelaide Office.'<sup>93</sup> While at one level this intervention and assistance would originate from the Government's Social Welfare Section in the guise of the social workers, this intervention would ultimately rely on the support of local communities, regional GNCs and other interested parties. However, the ability for social workers to make country visits became harder rather than easier in the years to come, making regional support increasingly the exclusive domain of local communities and GNCs.<sup>94</sup>

### **The Special Project scheme: German migrants and rural isolation<sup>95</sup>**

The Special Project scheme itself originated from specific labour shortages surrounding the Australian Government's national works projects. It grew out of the necessity to expedite the process of selection and migration of men recruited from European countries without bilateral

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<sup>92</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13. Three page report of Cuddihy's visit to Mt Gambier 9-26 September 1951, 15 October 1951, 2-3.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*, 1.

<sup>94</sup> By 1959 the number of social workers had reduced from twenty-three to fifteen. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 151.

<sup>95</sup> The Special Project migration scheme outlined above is discussed in further detail in Appendix 1 as it applies to German migrants.

migration agreements. The purpose of this Special Projects scheme, then, was to fill a labour shortage and, as outlined by the Department of Immigration in a circular in 1951,

to simplify the normal "Landing Permit" procedure in its application to firms or instrumentalities desirous of introducing groups of European workers, including Western German workers, for employment in Australia on special projects.<sup>96</sup>

This resulted in a Special Projects scheme which stipulated a two-year work contract with the promise of repatriation at the end of the period of employment. Also, in keeping with the Landing Permit procedures for non-assisted passage migrants, this scheme further stipulated that passage fares were not to be borne by the government. In this instance they were to be paid by the firms bringing out the German men. This financial burden was ultimately passed on to the German workers themselves, and became the most obvious symbol of their disadvantaged position in Australian society.

We know from the Migrant Database and other sources that Special Project Germans largely comprised young men between the ages of eighteen and thirty, recruited from major cities in Western Germany with mixed intentions regarding permanent re-settlement.<sup>97</sup> One such group of forty-four men, leaving Berlin for Australia in April 1951, were interviewed for an article in the British licensed *Telegraf* newspaper. These boys revealed their motivations for leaving Germany. One twenty-one year-old carpenter remarked, 'I had work in Berlin all right, but it has been my wish all along to go abroad. If I am not going to like it there I shall come back after two years'.<sup>98</sup> Another young man, an unemployed carpenter also from Berlin, reasoned that, 'we can hardly fare worse over there than here. There is sufficient work in Australia - only few men are living there'.<sup>99</sup> Evidently, an adventurous spirit accompanied these young men leaving Germany for Australia.

In due course South Australian and Tasmanian social workers identified German Special Project workers as clearly disadvantaged migrants in their respective states. They worked for employers such as the state and commonwealth railways, state government departments, public housing agencies, and small private firms holding government infrastructure and

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<sup>96</sup> NAA: A1838, 1531/72 Part 1, Australian-German Migration Agreement, 23 November 1951.

<sup>97</sup> See Appendix 1, esp. 1.3, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.9.

<sup>98</sup> NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/7 Part 2. Germany. Relations with Australia - Migration. 'What a Pity Girls are said to be scarce there', *Telegraf*, 2 April 1951.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

building contracts. Much of the work undertaken by these SP migrants saw them located in remote areas of the nation such as the Nullabor Plains, small country towns such as Taillem Bend, Peterborough and Leigh Creek in South Australia, Cooma in New South Wales, and Bronte Park and Penguin in Tasmania. In general it was noted by the social workers that this rural isolation served to exacerbate the migrants' normal settlement and adjustment problems. Specifically, South Australian and Tasmanian social worker reports reveal amongst these isolated rural migrants a tendency towards mental illness and depression, higher rates of suicide, and little to no opportunity to mix with Australians. Social worker Graeme Hunter identified these migrants as 'handicapped', stating that in South Australia there were two distinctly disadvantaged groups, 'those living and working in isolated areas, and those groups of people congregating in hostels and centres'.<sup>100</sup> This point was reiterated time and again in the reports of the Social Welfare Section, suggesting a less than satisfactory response from the Department of Immigration. Indicative of the government's approach to the Special Project scheme in general, these German workers were simply viewed as economic resources contracted by individual employers rather than potential Australian citizens. There is no evidence to suggest during the course of the short lived Special Project migration scheme that steps were taken by the department to rectify the situation.

South Australian social worker Cuddihy first observed a group of German Special Project workers on a visit to Port Pirie and Port Augusta in January 1952. Recently arrived in the country, these men were all employed by the South Australian and Commonwealth Railways. There were many other migrants in the region but as Cuddihy observed, 'in the main their queries were of a personal nature and concerned themselves only. In most instances, these required on-the-spot action only'.<sup>101</sup> During his stay, Cuddihy visited German migrants living in railway worker hostels in Terrowie and Peterborough. He reported on the unique problems faced by these railway workers, bred of the Special Project scheme in particular. They included the financial burdens of their fares to Australia, grievances regarding conditions on board the vessels en route to Australia given the high cost of fares, verbal promises by employers to help with bringing out families, sparsely furnished accommodation, and the issue of being taxed as single men in Australia regardless of their having dependants still residing in

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<sup>100</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Quarterly Report of Social Welfare Officer Hunter, January to March 1951, 2.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, Five page report of Cuddihy's visit to Port Augusta and Port Pirie, January 1952, 1.

Germany.<sup>102</sup> Cuddihy recognised that while the problems associated with this scheme were ‘beyond the scope of his work’, he felt that ‘because of the observations made on the spot, they should at least be noted for reference purposes’.<sup>103</sup> He further observed that the German migrants appeared to be ‘good types, and should ultimately settle down satisfactorily if given the chance’ but that at the present time these ‘same migrants would willingly return to Germany’. He concluded there was not much he could do professionally, as many of their problems had been ‘a direct result of the Scheme itself and [tended] to make for an awkward situation’.<sup>104</sup> This frank criticism was rare among casework reports however it did not amount to a criticism of immigration or assimilation policy. The criticism was more reservedly directed at the practical anomalies of a small, specific immigration scheme, couched in the language and aims of the department’s assimilation program. It is evident that specific case by case criticism was a strategy utilised by social workers striving to balance their welfare obligations to clients with an acute awareness of their employment situation and professional standing.

Two months later, in March 1952 Cuddihy returned to Port Lincoln, where, again, a small group of German Special Project migrants came to his attention. These Germans had initially been contracted to the Commonwealth Railways but had absconded because of unsatisfactory working and living conditions. They were then employed by the Department of Engineering and Water Supply. Cuddihy reported that four of the men were married and severely depressed at the prospect of not seeing their families for some time. Cuddihy expressed concern for their mental health, writing, ‘I fear that a number of these migrants will have mental breakdowns’.<sup>105</sup> This statement clearly demonstrates the social worker’s ability to approach migrant problems with compassion, advocating for them at a higher level. Still, advocacy aside, the Special Project workers received very little assistance from the Australian Government.

Due to staff shortages in the department’s Adelaide office, rural migrants, including German Special Project workers arriving in Port Augusta between October 1951 and September 1952,

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<sup>102</sup> *ibid*, five page report of Cuddihy’s visit to Port Augusta and Port Pirie, January 1952, 2-3.

<sup>103</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/3/4. Five page report of Cuddihy’s visit to Port Augusta and Port Pirie, January 1952, 2.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid*, 5.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*, three page report of Cuddihy’s visit to Port Lincoln, March - April 1952, 2.

had no personal contact with social welfare officers.<sup>106</sup> This was exacerbated in 1953, when no further country visits were made by departmental social workers. To address this gap in services more emphasis was being placed on the social workers' coordinating role. Senior social worker Miss Lisle Johnson, reported at the end of 1953 that regional branches of the GNC of South Australia had been called upon when necessary. This approach had begun in earnest a year earlier with social worker Hunter, who had initially identified South Australia's rural migrants as 'handicapped' and severely disadvantaged. In 1952 Hunter cited the activities of the GNC amongst railway workers, including a Pen Friend idea that was showing 'signs of functioning satisfactorily'.<sup>107</sup> Johnson reflected in 1953 that the casework load of the social worker was changing. She informed Canberra that problems they encountered were no longer solely related to settlement issues but were 'often deep-seated ones involving personality conflicts and marital disharmony'.<sup>108</sup> Johnson's report indicated that this was reflective of the 1953 immigration program in general: 'The inflow of newcomers to the State has not been particularly great in comparison with earlier times, so ... the period can be viewed as one of consolidation.'<sup>109</sup> Thus the casework focus had shifted from pragmatic settlement issues to more personal and social issues. However, the migrants' experiences of war, displacement, the migration process and the presence of cultural differences remained central to the social workers' understanding of their clients' situation and their struggles to find a place and a voice within Australian society.

This period of consolidation was not so keenly felt by Cuddihy who, in 1953, was still campaigning for more visits to country areas. He believed that more should and could be done to assist those migrants who were cut off from metropolitan services, and he made this view known to his immediate superiors. He constantly reiterated a point he considered painfully obvious, and one that needed serious attention:

Approximately a quarter of our alien population lives outside the metropolitan area. To assume that these people have made a more satisfactory adjustment of settlement than those living in the metropolitan areas is wishful thinking.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid*, nine page Annual Report of Hunter, October 1951 - September 1952, 2.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*, 6.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*, four page Report of Johnson, 31 October - 31 December 1953, 1.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*, 4.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, Annual Report of Cuddihy, 1953.



While Miss Johnson's general feeling in 1953 was that the Adelaide section had moved on from initial settlement related casework to deal with more complex personal casework, Cuddihy's reports clearly illustrate a continuing gulf between metropolitan and country services to migrants.<sup>111</sup>

In Tasmania the Special Project migrant situation was somewhat different. Much of the state was considered isolated and its infrastructure and national works projects resulted in larger congregations of migrant workers, as opposed to the small dispersed work groups in rural South Australia. However, the Tasmanian social work reports examined in the same time period further reveal the struggles of social workers to meet their professional and political directives. Tarbath first visited Tasmania in February 1950, shortly after his appointment by Dobson. As we saw earlier, some of his initial casework centred on marital problems amongst migrants. While in Tasmania, Tarbath based himself at the Commonwealth Migration Office in Hobart. From here he conducted almost monthly trips to isolated areas and work camps throughout Tasmania. From February 1950 until August 1951 his monthly reports to Canberra documented the structure and conduct of the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Scheme worker camps through which many German and English migrants, as well as Polish displaced persons, would come. His reports offer pertinent observations about migrant experiences in rural areas, and on more than one occasion these reports crossed many desks in Canberra. In June 1951 Tarbath's annual report brought the plight of rural migrants to the attention of departmental officer Armstrong, who we met earlier through his involvement with the ACCs and publicity of the assimilation program. Armstrong acknowledged from Tarbath's report that 'because of isolation, all problems are accentuated' resulting in the need for 'fairly frequent visits by the Department's Social Workers'.<sup>112</sup> The unique problems of rural migrant isolation, then, were recognised not only by individual social workers and Dobson's Canberra based Social Welfare Section, but also by departmental officers working in related assimilationist areas. While Tarbath's reports reveal a departmental appreciation of the problems of rural migrants, policy change was not responsive during the 1950s. Rural isolation remained a social welfare priority for much of the decade and continued to be managed by social workers and, as we will see in Chapter Five, the GNCs.

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<sup>111</sup> Still, the social workers' focus on specifically SP German migrant problems became less prominent in their reports as the West German Assisted Passage scheme came into operation in late 1952 and the SP scheme ceased operation. See Appendix 1.5 and 1.6.

<sup>112</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/6. Letter to Armstrong from Dobson, July 1951, 1.

German migrants appear frequently in the reports of Tarbath from 1951 to 1953. This coincided with the arrival of Special Project Germans to Tasmania. Recruited by the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission to work on the construction of dams throughout Tasmania, forty of these German workers were housed near Launceston when Tarbath visited them in 1951. The camp had few luxuries, with Tarbath's unfavourable report revealing an entire lack of social amenities and provision for English classes.<sup>113</sup> The following month Tarbath reported on a similarly unsatisfactory worker's camp near New Norfolk: '13 German nationals [are] resident in this camp with a number of Australians, and live under canvas, two to a tent'. No provision for kitchens and poor drainage in the wet months added to the general squalor.<sup>114</sup> These glimpses reveal the early experiences of German migrants in Tasmania, living and working in unsatisfactory conditions with little to no opportunity for social interactions.

From 1952 onwards Tarbath focused more attention on the plight of Special Project migrants. In his annual report of 1952 he described the disadvantages inherent in rural settlement in general and the Special Projects scheme in particular. Criticising the Special Project selection process, Tarbath proffered the view that unless changes were made to the scheme itself this great reservoir of good German stock would be rendered useless. The picture was such that:

most of the Special Projects workers from Germany this last year have been from Berlin and seemed to have little knowledge of the surrounds and conditions they were going to. There appears to be a lack of an induction scheme for these men and they form judgements and opinions from their immediate surrounds and what they learned from other migrants.<sup>115</sup>

These Germans were unsuited and unprepared for life in rural Australia, and Tasmania in particular. Tarbath warned Canberra that their individual and collective experiences were detrimental to Australia's reputation overseas, and subsequently the department's long-term immigration aims.<sup>116</sup> Thus a pattern began to emerge where social workers identified the Special Project migration scheme as one which contributed greatly to the maladjustment of these early German arrivals. This opportunistic scheme showed little regard for the young

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<sup>113</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/6. Four page monthly report of Tarbath, July 1951, 3.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*, five page monthly report of Tarbath, August 1951, 4.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid*, Annual Report of Tarbath, 1952, 11.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid*, 11-12.

German men it recruited, seeking simply to fill a gap in the labour force at significantly reduced cost to the Australian Government. Tarbath reasoned that it would be unfortunate to lose this reservoir of 'good German stock' simply to achieve the short-term goals of the Special Project scheme. He further argued that it was in the government's interest to take a longer term view of these men and their settlement concerns. Tarbath reasoned that bad publicity surrounding the scheme would be detrimental to the Government's assimilation program. Tarbath's implicit treatment of 'good German stock' as desirable and assimilable migrants highlights the social worker's clear awareness of the broader social and political context in which he had to operate.

The arrival of Special Project migrants in Tasmania during 1952 resulted in growing unrest between German and Polish migrants. Tarbath observed in 1952 that there was 'an undercurrent of prejudice apparent in the camps which was not present last year'.<sup>117</sup> In Launceston, where German and Italian migrants comprised the majority, Tarbath reported mounting hostility and rivalry between the two national groups, mainly over the affections of women who were in short supply.<sup>118</sup> Tarbath also detected a growing Australian prejudice towards migrants in general, which he attributed largely to a decline in the economic and employment situation in Tasmania in 1953. He noted that while the economic situation was good, 'the antipathy towards Italians remains, [but] prejudice would spread to other nationalities if economic conditions deteriorated'.<sup>119</sup> Indeed this prediction held true as Tarbath noted a year later: 'There has been a fairly marked increase in prejudice towards migrants during the past year - generally attributable to the decline in the economic situation'.<sup>120</sup> While much of the Australian prejudice witnessed by Tarbath was directed more generally towards migrants, Tarbath's reports suggest a slightly different German migrant experience.

The main source of antagonism towards German migrants in these early years appeared to originate from other migrants rather than Australians. Tarbath's reports suggested the presence of a higher incidence of racism, prejudice and hostility between migrants in the work camps than within the general community. Furthermore, when hostility was encountered by German

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<sup>117</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/6. Annual Report of Tarbath, 1952, 11.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid*, 11-12.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, four page report of Tarbath's visit to the West Coast of Tasmania, November 1952, 2-3.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid*, Annual Report of Tarbath, 1953, 5.

migrants in the wider Tasmanian community, this largely comprised concerns that the migrant was not becoming 'Australian'. Tarbath did not interpret this hostility as nationally oriented, but rather more aligned with the general notion of migrant assimilation. At most, Special Project Germans were accused of working too hard and speaking foreign languages in public rather than being singled out as Germans. Tarbath cited instances of hostility directed towards the 'Balts', Polish, Italian and English migrants, all of whom were new additions to the relatively isolated Tasmanian community. However, it appears the German Special Project workers were rarely targeted in this way, which goes some way to explaining the results of postwar public surveys suggesting Germans were close to the top of an implicit hierarchy of desirable migrants in the Australian community.<sup>121</sup> As we can conclude from the reports of Tarbath, a reliance on the notion of Germans as 'desirable' migrants ignores the true difficulties they experienced in postwar Australia.<sup>122</sup>

After four years of working with migrants in rural areas, the Tasmanian and South Australian social workers found themselves in differing situations. Both states had gained valuable experience dealing with isolated rural migrants between 1950 and 1953, but it appears that in Tasmania greater gains were being made. The Tasmanian situation was reflective of the wider nation, in that regular country visits were being made to service isolated migrants and there was a general recognition of the need for and importance of this service at a higher level. In Perth, where isolation and staffing issues had earlier prevented these practical regional visits, by 1953 this situation was being rectified. At a national level Dobson enlisted the help of departmental officer Armstrong to achieve this end. Dobson's memo explained:

Since Miss O'Brien's appointment this year ... [Mr Vincent] could now afford to spend more time in the country areas, working in conjunction with the Good Neighbour Council.... For this type of work I feel Mr Vincent is peculiarly suited.<sup>123</sup>

Armstrong's handwritten notes on the bottom of the memo reveal that arrangements had been made with the Chief Migration Officer in Perth 'to enable Mr Vincent to make periodical visits to strategic areas, using his own car and receiving mileage allowance'.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Victor Calla, 'Anglo-Australian Attitudes toward Immigrants: A Review of Survey Evidence', *International Migration Review* 17, no. 1 (Spring, 1983), 123-124.

<sup>122</sup> Indeed, the German case offers some parallels with the perceived and real experiences of Australia's postwar British migrants.

<sup>123</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13. Letter to Armstrong from Dobson, 14 April 1953, 1.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid*; see also letter (handwritten reply) to Dobson from Armstrong, 22 April 1953, 2.

The situation presented in South Australia was quite different in 1953. Again, Dobson was in control of the issue. Correspondence between Dobson and Armstrong in September 1953 reveals widespread departmental praise for the contributions of social workers in the field of assimilation. Dobson did express concern, however, that this appreciation was not evident in all states. She informed Armstrong that ‘a very different picture is presented in the South Australian Office, where it has always been stated that there are no problems if migrants do not write to the department, however isolated the migrant may be’. Thus, the opinions of the Commonwealth Migration Officer (CMO) were brought to Canberra’s attention with Dobson explaining that assimilation gains in rural areas would be lost if voluntary organisations and the migrants themselves could not be assured of regular visits. Dobson’s criticism culminated in her request that the department direct the Commonwealth Migration Officer in this matter. Again, Armstrong’s handwritten comments at the bottom of Dobson’s letter indicate the department’s response, suggesting that an upcoming CMO’s conference would

present the opportunity to make clear the Department’s policy as to the duties of social workers with particular reference to the necessity for such social workers to pay regular visits to country areas.<sup>125</sup>

Thus state-based social workers used the position of the Social Welfare Section, and Dobson as its head, to advocate for migrants and instigate changes to the Government’s settlement program. Couched in terms of its assimilationist impact, the social workers’ efforts ultimately informed the growing service provision for the migrant population under their care.

Although South Australia was somewhat hampered in its attempts to service migrants, ultimately Dobson’s survey of the Social Welfare Section revealed that by the end of 1953 great gains had been made by social workers in the area of assimilation. Dobson’s proximity to departmental staff in Canberra, such as Armstrong, helped to support, communicate and reinforce these gains. Dobson attributed the valuable contribution made by her Section to the social workers’ ‘intimate knowledge, firstly of migrants and their problems, and secondly, of community resources’. She tempered this observation with the warning that such contributions could only be made if the social workers were ‘used to the best advantage, and allowed to utilise not only their case-work knowledge, but the wider training received during their course

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<sup>125</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13. Letter to Armstrong from Dobson, 1 September 1953; see also handwritten note from Armstrong, 15 September 1953, 2.

which covers community organisation and group work'.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, the unique problems of migrants in rural areas, and especially those of Special Project German migrants, highlight a postwar professional thrust towards community work. This is borne out by a trend in postwar social welfare practice which saw the gradual merging of traditional casework with broader communication goals towards the coordination of new and existing support networks for clients. This postwar trend, reflected in the work of the Social Welfare Section amongst migrants, was designed to achieve a sustainable and holistic approach to social welfare.<sup>127</sup>

### **Mental Illness casework: professionalism and garnering knowledge**

The incidence of mental illness among migrants was an issue essentially ignored by the government and the community at large during the postwar decade. Migrants suffering from mental health disorders, termed the 'mentally-ill' by departmental social workers, were, for the most part, invisible to the government and the wider Australian community. Historians and sociologists concur that during the 1950s and 1960s the condition of these migrants was simply perceived as a failure to adjust, or an unwillingness to assimilate into Australian society.<sup>128</sup> Casework reports of the Social Welfare Section reveal a more complex picture of migrants suffering from mental health disorders. Broad experiences of war, loss, displacement, and the process of emigration itself were all contributing factors to a migrant's mental health. Coupled with social welfare issues surrounding settlement in a new country including inadequacies of language, feelings of loneliness and isolation, the existence of national tensions, and deprivation of family and companionship, departmental social workers recognised amongst those migrants with mental health issues the complex and individual nature required of their casework approach. At a very basic level, the reports of departmental social workers reveal a major difference between those migrants who adjusted and those who succumbed to mental illness: the presence of family and community support structures. The departmental social worker laboured to help many migrants, but at every turn they

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<sup>126</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/13. Letter to Armstrong from Dobson, 1 September 1953; see also letter to Armstrong from Dobson, 14 April 1953.

<sup>127</sup> Lawrence, *Professional Social Work*, 166-167.

<sup>128</sup> See Wickramasinghe, 'Out of Mind'; Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*; Dickey, *No Charity There*; Parker, *Focus on Migrants*; Jones, *Australian Welfare State*; and Lawrence, *Professional Social Work*.

encountered inadequacies in the support structures for migrants with a mental health disorder.<sup>129</sup>

The task of caring for migrants with a mental illness was not an easy one for departmental social workers. Jordens notes that:

Australian cultural attitudes towards the mentally ill, the unresponsiveness of psychiatric services to the needs of migrants, the shortage of multilingual psychiatrists and lack of support from migrant organisations made their task extraordinarily difficult.<sup>130</sup>

In *Alien to Citizen*, Jordens draws attention to the plight of mentally ill postwar migrants: ‘largely invisible, their needs were marginalised and their rights as citizens largely ignored’.<sup>131</sup> Jordens documents the inadequacies of postwar state mental health systems and reveals, in comparison, the importance of departmental social workers in ‘making visible previously marginalised groups within the migrant community’.

The social workers’ initial and primary functions in dealing with migrant mental illness were the visiting of migrants confined to hospitals, the coordination and encouragement of national and community groups to visit these hospitals in an effort to combat migrant feelings of abandonment and loneliness, thus preventing further relapses among identified psychiatric cases, and finally sourcing appropriate employment and housing for recently discharged patients. The phenomenon of mental illness among German migrants accounted for a relatively small percentage of casework compared with that of DPs.<sup>132</sup> However, a lack of family support structures amongst the early DP and Special Project migration schemes tended towards a higher incidence of mental illness for both of these groups.

Tasmanian, New South Wales and South Australian departmental social welfare reports offer quantitative evidence of the strong correlation between mental health and family support

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<sup>129</sup> This was arguably the case for all Australians, as Jordens notes that ‘the mentally ill had no place in the imagined community of Australian citizens’. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 74.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid*, 73.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid*, 74.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*, 78. This percentage was proportional, as in the period under review there were tens of thousands more DP arrivals than there were German arrivals. This is borne out in the caseload statistics for departmental social workers in South Australia between 1950 and 1953. During this time South Australian social workers dealt with 1868 new migrant social welfare cases in total. Of this number, only 57 cases involved German migrants, with an overwhelming majority of Polish migrant casework (530 new cases). Other significant caseloads were as follows: 165 Yugoslavian cases, 164 Ukrainian cases, 138 Hungarian cases, 134 Latvian cases, 81 cases of British migrants, and 43 cases were Italians. See Appendix 3.1.

among migrants. During 1950-51 Tasmania recorded that ‘in the nineteen cases, fifteen persons had no known relatives in Australia’. During the same period in South Australia a higher incidence of mental illness was recorded, with forty five cases noted as opposed to Tasmania’s nineteen.<sup>133</sup> New South Wales reported that four fifths of its ‘mentally-ill’ migrants were ‘unmarried and mostly without relatives or friends, a state undoubtedly symptomatic of their mental condition’.<sup>134</sup> In New South Wales it was further observed that single men in particular were at risk because without involvement in community organisations, church groups, national and sporting bodies, they made ‘no very satisfactory social or work relationships and have not the stability of family life to compensate for the limitations of their contract period’.<sup>135</sup> This was also witnessed by Western Australian social workers who reported on cases handled during 1950 to 1951 that there was a ‘preponderance of mental disorders where people are out here by themselves and have not made satisfactory social adjustments’. The feedback of social workers in this area supported the government’s wider immigration goals that, as we saw in Chapter One, were reoriented from short-term labour gains to more family inclined migration by the mid 1950s.

The experiences and reports of departmental social workers suggest a low incidence of mental illness amongst German migrants in general. A predictable exception to this was the Special Project Germans. The reports of departmental social workers reveal that generally, from 1949 to 1951, mental illness casework featured more highly amongst Polish ex-servicemen and DPs than British, Dutch or German migrants. However, in Tasmania and South Australia, instances of mental health problems amongst Germans appeared regularly in social worker reports.<sup>136</sup> This early German migrant caseload comprised largely German Special Project migrants, single and married German men who despaired over their extended family separations. South Australian social worker Cuddihy reported on such a group in Port Lincoln in 1952, of whom four were married and despondent over their financial inability to bring their wives and children to Australia. Specific to their work contracts, weekly or monthly board and fare repayments were deducted from their wages. Cuddihy noted the poor financial situation in which this placed Special Project workers: ‘most of the balance is sent either as cash or goods

<sup>133</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/4. Annual Report of Senior Social Worker Hilda Wilson for 12 months ended 30 June 1951, Statistical Attachment, 27 July 1951.

<sup>134</sup> NAA: A445/1, 276/2/5. Social Welfare - Special Problems - Mental Illness, 1951 – 1953, excerpts on mental illness, Tasmania and New South Wales, 1950-51.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*, NSW excerpts, 1950-1951.

<sup>136</sup> See Appendix 3 for Cuddihy’s casework statistics between 1950 and 1953.



to their descendants in Germany. This simply means that they are not able to save anything towards the cost of their families' fares to Australia'.<sup>137</sup> Cuddihy's concern was for the mental health of these migrants. He warned Canberra that: 'If this situation continues for very long, I fear that a number of these migrants will have mental breakdowns'. In bringing this to the attention of his superiors, Cuddihy framed his concerns within the larger context of the immigration program: 'This will mean that they will then become a complete charge on the Australian economy.'<sup>138</sup> Combining his professional concern for these German migrants with his role as an agent of the government, Cuddihy operated within the boundaries of both his professional and political constraints. Contrary to the claims of Lawrence and McMahon, who state that they were unaware or unwilling to challenge the wider political framework in which they operated, departmental social workers balanced the seemingly contradictory aims of social welfare and government immigration policy, revealing their awareness of the fundamental dichotomy of agency and method within which they operated.

By 1953 a different type of migrant was arriving in Australia. The DPs scheme had almost dried up and most arrivals were now assisted or sponsored migrants. West German Assisted Passage Scheme migrants did not share the financial burdens of the Special Project migrants, and consisted predominantly of young married migrants and family units. In its first twelve months of operation, the West German Assisted Passage scheme also made provision for the entry to Australia of 1,000 dependants of German Special Project workers already living in Australia.<sup>139</sup> This allowance sought to redress some of the problems of the Special Project scheme.<sup>140</sup> As we have noted, by 1953, as the majority of postwar German migrants began arriving in Australia, immigration policy had shifted away from short-term labour gains and towards more family oriented migration. Thus the beginnings of the German Assisted Passage scheme saw a marked change, with the Australian Government committed to providing a more comprehensive and further reaching settlement program, as opposed to short-term employment strategies. Similarly, as we will continue to see throughout the thesis, with over five years' experience in settling and assimilating earlier migrant arrivals, by the mid 1950s

<sup>137</sup> NAA: A445, 276/3/4. Report of Cuddihy's visit to Port Lincoln, 27 March 1952 – 5 April 1952, 2.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*, 2.

<sup>139</sup> NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4, Part 1, Negotiation of Migrations Agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany (Part II), May 1952, 6. See also Richards, *Destination Australia*, 190.

<sup>140</sup> Although, as Jordens acknowledged, some Special Project workers had taken out loans to sponsor their families migration to Australia shortly before the initiation of the West German Assisted Passage Scheme, she notes that 'their appeal for assisted passages for those relatives already en route was rejected'. Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 93

both the public and private sectors in Australia were increasingly better informed about the needs of migrants.

### **Conclusion**

On the surface it would be easy to conclude that the Social Welfare Section of the Department of Immigration worked within the government's assimilationist framework to partially meet the needs of migrants and further the government's migrant settlement policies. What started out as an exciting example of grass roots change in social welfare practice during the 1950s was slow to translate into better administrative and structural provision of migrant services. One of the most important roles of the Social Welfare Section during this time was their continuous merging of the two seemingly disparate roles of agency and social welfare in an attempt to achieve better outcomes for migrants. They advocated for migrants, and at times on behalf of community organisations (such as regional hospitals in the case of migrant medical costs), ensuring the government's receptiveness by construing the migrant position in terms of its impact on the immigration and assimilation process. Ultimately these social workers were aware of the ideology driving their agency and their actions offer further evidence of the flexible and liberal implementation of assimilationist policy at both the macro and micro levels within government and the wider community, which we will see again through the work of the GNC in Chapter Five.

Through their early experiences with migrants, departmental social workers became conscious of the political and social confines within which they had to work. Their reports demonstrate the professionalism subtly employed to assist migrants and to effect pragmatic change. Being an emergent profession, departmental social workers were able to approach migrant problems in a practical, even experimental manner without the rigours of an imposed ideological framework, as evidenced by the early years of their professional journal, as well as their detailed casework approach. Their early work with migrants identified some key areas inhibiting the successful settlement, and hence assimilation, of migrants. The social workers' proximity to the federal government in Canberra, as well as their community outreach work and coordinating role in the regions, most notably in the field of rurally isolated migrants, contributed to the relative success of their approach. Officially mandated to implement a policy of migrant assimilation, the example of departmental social workers offers further

evidence of the postwar process of policy negotiation and implementation through the provision of settlement services. Departmental social workers were an important conduit through which government, departments, agencies and migrants could communicate their needs and expectations. This was particularly evident in the section's work amongst early German migrant arrivals. We will continue to trace the experience of German migrants in the following two chapters where we delve into the microcosm of the Lutheran Church in Australia.

## 3

**Australian Lutheranism and postwar immigration: community responses**

Religious institutions were uniquely placed within postwar Australian society to undertake work in the field of migrant settlement. Their established community networks and inclination towards pastoral care saw Australian church bodies willing and able to receive migrants into their congregations. As we saw in Part One of the thesis, the Commonwealth Government developed strategies through the Australian Citizenship Conventions and the Social Welfare Section of the Department of Immigration to call purposefully on existing community bodies and voluntary groups to assist in its postwar immigration program. This, along with assimilationist rhetoric that maintained migrants should access existing avenues of support rather than becoming the subjects of specialised attention, saw Australian church bodies, and in the context of this chapter the Lutheran Church in particular, well positioned to cater to the needs of migrants. We will see that at a superficial level, like all postwar organisations working in the field of migrant settlement, the Lutheran Church operated within the bounds of the government's assimilationist policy. What we have learnt, however, from the examples of the ACCs and departmental social workers, and will continue to learn in Part Three through the grass roots example of the Good Neighbour Movement in Chapter Five, is that the 1950s was less a period of dogmatic policy imposition from the top and more a negotiated interpretation of needs, policy, and practice that laid the foundations for the eventual recognition of Australia as a multicultural state. This chapter, then, builds on what we have learnt of the process of assimilation in Part One of the thesis, and examines its function and impact within the microcosm of the Lutheran Church in Australia. Ultimately it reveals the ways and means by which the Lutheran Church engaged in this conversation, offering further evidence of the process at an agency and community level.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA, known until 1944 as ELSA, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia) was established in the 1860s, while its twentieth century rival, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA) was not formed until 1921.<sup>1</sup> Both synods worked in the field of postwar immigration and migrant settlement. During the 1950s both synods of the Lutheran Church in Australia catered to the needs of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Carmichael, 'Past and Present German Migration' for detailed discussion.

postwar migrant community, and specifically the German migrant community. They employed local, regional, national and international tactics in doing so. Initially in their negotiations with the Australian government both Lutheran synods drew on their European, and specifically German, Lutheran foundations as evidence of their suitability to receive European migrants. Secondly both churches used postwar immigration to strengthen their ties with international Lutheranism and increase the reach of their churches. Once migrants began arriving in Australia both synods recognised the necessity to work together to cater to new arrivals, at the very least to avoid unnecessary overlap of services. Through the establishment of immigration boards, the placement of pastors on ships and in migrant reception centres, and a growing dialogue of coordination between the two synods, postwar immigration occasioned the beginnings of a collaborative approach by both synods to migrant assimilation. This approach was further enhanced by the churches' use of print media to keep their assimilation work in the public and congregational eye. As church awareness of the assimilation and settlement needs of the postwar Lutheran community grew, the church responded by forming migrant congregations, engaging migrant pastors, producing foreign language publications and expanding pastoral duties to include broad social, practical and economic assistance to migrants. This chapter demonstrates how this awareness developed by examining the negotiations between government, church, migrant and 'old Australian' congregational members. Ultimately this chapter elucidates at the micro level the subtle negotiation and implementation of assimilationist policy within an existing community. An examination of this process in the microcosm of the Lutheran Church strengthens our understanding of how assimilationist rhetoric was disseminated, negotiated, understood and implemented at the local level where migrants came into daily contact with the wider Australian community.

Through their work with migrants, both Lutheran synods managed to avoid the heavy assimilationist rhetoric of the Australian Government, maintain foreign language services and publications, establish national and multicultural congregations, and simultaneously strengthen their ties with Germany and the wider international Lutheran community. An examination of Australian Lutheranism in the 1950s reveals the means by which the arrival of German migrants, and the immigration program in particular, led to a pattern of cooperation and collaboration between the two synods. In the final analysis, this chapter demonstrates how cooperation and the coordination of migrant settlement and assimilation services at both the national and local levels provided strong impetus for change resulting in the amalgamation of

the two synods and the founding of one Lutheran Church of Australia. Ultimately, then, this chapter reveals parallels between what was happening at the local and national levels, demonstrating on a practical community level how needs, just as much as policy, determined responses. In turn, this chapter further enhances our understanding of the period as one of interpretation of policy and negotiation according to local need rather than simply one of top down enforcement of a British assimilationist imperative.

German Lutheran migrants arriving in 1950s Australia were vastly different from their nineteenth century Lutheran forbears. Demographically, postwar migrants constituted a less religious and more urban community than Australian Lutheranism's nineteenth century founders. As we will see, this brought many challenges for both Lutheran synods in Australia. Both synods overcame these challenges, and drew on their German Lutheran foundations to help reinvigorate and strengthen Lutheranism in Australia. Indeed, sociologist Gary Bouma wrote of Australia's religiously plural society that 'religion has always been a major factor in social life' and that among migrant groups it can prompt the gathering and formation of new communities.<sup>2</sup> In general terms, immigration is conducive to religious affiliation because it offers migrants group identification and interaction with the host society in times of great personal upheaval. We saw some of this personal upheaval in Chapter Two through the experience of departmental social workers working with migrants. Perhaps serving to mitigate this upheaval, religious affiliation, as sociologist Abe Wade Ata observes, 'may be seen as a counter to feelings of alienation and marginality in an increasingly multicultural society'. Religious affiliation commonly 'assists adjustment, providing separation, coherence, a boundary - in a word, meaning'.<sup>3</sup> Fellow sociologist and educationalist, JJ Smolicz, went further to argue that 'a religion-based ethnic group (provided it has the financial resources) can ... continue to provide its members with material for their ethnic system development'.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in postwar Australia, religion could be seen as offering a means of acceptance and a sense of belonging for new migrants. Bouma further argues that for many migrants religious commitment increases upon arrival because of the opportunities it affords them to meet others

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<sup>2</sup> Gary D Bouma, *Religion: Meaning, Transcendence and Community in Australia* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1992), 19, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Abe Wade Ata, ed., *Religion and Ethnic Identity: An Australian Case Study* (Victoria: Spectrum Publications, 1988), 1, 4.

<sup>4</sup> JJ Smolicz, 'Core Values and Cultural Identity,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 (January, 1981), 87.

who share similar linguistic, cultural and historical experiences.<sup>5</sup> For Australian Lutheranism, as with other Australian religious organisations, postwar immigration offered a unique opportunity to assist large numbers of new arrivals and concurrently extend existing church membership.

### **The sources**

This chapter examines the holdings of the Lutheran Archives of Australia to shed light on the newly emerging postwar German Lutheran community and place the responses of the church to migrant settlement within the wider framework of the assimilationist period of Australian immigration history. This examination of 1950s Lutheranism is crucial to an understanding of the structural changes effected within the Lutheran Church by 1966. The archival evidence surveyed includes the national and local South Australian annual synod reports of both Lutheran Churches, Church Executive Board and Department of Immigration communications regarding the immigration program and departmental assimilation policy, minutes of both Church immigration boards which were established exclusively to respond to migrant arrivals, national, state and local congregational publications and other associated print media, and the local activities of both synods' migrant congregations and pastors, covering the period 1947-1966. Lutheranism's foundational, institutional, and archival home in South Australia lends itself, by design, to a South Australian focus. In keeping with the macro and micro approach of the thesis, however, this chapter draws out state and national interconnections. The evidence demonstrates, within the context of Lutheran responses to migrant assimilation, how the local and national situations serve to inform each other. Ultimately the archival evidence of the activities and negotiations of both Lutheran synods at both the local and national level reveals that early work in receiving migrants was at once motivated by a moral and godly sense of duty towards fellow Lutherans as well as a desire to introduce new blood and enthusiasm into flagging Australian Lutheran congregations. This dual motivation, then, forms the basis upon which the Church responded to Australia's postwar immigration program in general and the settlement and assimilation of migrants in particular.

### **Australian Lutheran identity: fostering German heritage**

In Australia the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church were the two main beneficiaries of postwar German migration. By far, the Catholic Church absorbed the greater number of

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<sup>5</sup> Bouma, *Religion*, 54.

migrants. Between 1947 and 1949 alone, 23,000 Displaced Persons had arrived in Australia, 6,396 of whom were Lutherans, the rest almost exclusively Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox.<sup>6</sup> In statistical terms, the 1954 Census recorded 23,914 German-born Roman Catholics, compared with 15,263 German-born Lutherans.<sup>7</sup> However, the arrival of postwar migrants contributed to significant structural change within the Lutheran Church of Australia. Lutheranism has a long tradition in Australia, originating with the arrival of Pastor Kavel and his Klemzig Lutherans to South Australia in 1838.<sup>8</sup> The arrival of over 100,000 German migrants after 1945 presented the Church with an opportunity to strengthen these ties with Germany. The impact of the government's immigration program was significant. During the 1800s the Lutheran Church in Australia was characterised by a multitude of semi-independent synods. By the early twentieth century, two distinct rival synods had emerged nationally.<sup>9</sup> The differences between these two synods, however, could not withstand postwar societal changes, and they amalgamated into one Lutheran Church of Australia in 1966. While the Catholic Church welcomed a greater proportion of postwar migrants into its congregations, for Australian Lutheranism, mass migration, especially from western Germany, had a profound and lasting structural impact.

Australian Lutheranism's German heritage was sustained for over 100 years as a by-product of the close knit, religious nature of the first German Lutheran settlers to Australia, and specifically South Australia. A dense historiography exists of these first settlers, and a brief summary is useful in the context of this chapter. South Australia's early Lutheran settlers fled their homeland, escaping the religious persecution of Friedrich Wilhelm III.<sup>10</sup> They comprised regional groups who, once settled in South Australia, formed distinct religious German enclaves. Their settlements were geographically isolated from the metropolitan areas and, according to Ian Harmstorf, this isolation was reinforced by 'the social barriers created by the

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret Rilett, *And You Took Me In: Alfred and Helga Freund-Zinnbauer. A Biography* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1992), 91.

<sup>7</sup> Jerzy Zubryszki, *Immigrants in Australia: a demographic survey based upon the 1954 Census* (Parkville: Melbourne University Press, 1960), 56.

<sup>8</sup> It was not until the 1930s that Australian-Germans lost contact with the past character of the original 'closed settlements' of German Lutherans. Michael Clyne, 'Decay, preservation and renewal: notes on some Southern Australian German settlements,' *Journal of the Australian Universities Language and Literature Association* 29 (May, 1968), 40.

<sup>9</sup> For a general history of the Church see Everard Leske, *For Faith and Freedom: The story of Lutherans and Lutheranism in Australia 1838-1996* (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> See Harmstorf and Cigler, *The Germans in Australia*.



differences in language and religion'.<sup>11</sup> These isolated settlements fostered early Lutheran traditions in South Australia. With the expansion of these small German settlements through consolidation, renewed migration, successive generations, and better transport and communications, there was a growth in Lutheran parishes, German language schools, and cultural and sporting groups which spilled over into the metropolitan areas. In its infancy, then, the central premise of the Church in Australia centered on its German Lutheran faith.

This growth was hampered by the onset of the First World War, when German identity in Australia was dealt a crippling blow. Gerhard Fischer and Ian Harmstorf have extensively documented the ill treatment of Australia's German-born populations during this war.<sup>12</sup> A brief respite during the inter-war years saw German language services and schooling recommence, but Australian Lutheranism suffered further setbacks and discriminations during the Second World War, from which it seemed unlikely to recover. During the war years Australian Lutheranism was largely perceived as decidedly German in nature and outlook. The government's security services remained suspicious of the church as a potential 'hotbed of Nazism'.<sup>13</sup> As a result, between 1939 and 1945 Lutheran Sunday Schools and German language church services were shut down. In South Australia at least, two Lutheran day schools were permitted to stay open when Premier Thomas Playford refused to close Immanuel and Concordia Colleges on the basis that they were 'Christian' as opposed to 'German' schools and had been inspected by the Department of Education.<sup>14</sup> Lutheran congregations were disrupted by the internment of their pastors, especially those from UELCA, and any outward showing of Germanness in the community was looked upon with suspicion. One striking example of the government response to Australian Lutheranism during the war was the internment of UELCA Pastor Alfred Zinnbauer between 1941 and 1943. Zinnbauer, who we will become further acquainted with later in the chapter, was an Austrian

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<sup>11</sup> Young and others, *Hahndorf: A survey carried out for the Australian Heritage Commission*, V.2 (Techsearch Inc., Australia, 1981), 115.

<sup>12</sup> See Harmstorf, *The German Experience of Australia*. See also: Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy aliens: internment and the homefront experience in Australia, 1914-1920* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989); David Paech, *Persecution, detention and internment of Lutherans (in South Australia) in two world wars: A dark spot in Australia's century of federation* (Klemzig: self published, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> NAA: A1608, H19/1/1, War Records. Aliens – Lutheran Church, 1949 – 1945; and NAA: A9108, ROLL 13/33, Report on investigations in Germany of Nazi activities in Australia, 1949 - 1950.

<sup>14</sup> LAA: *The Australian Lutheran*, 29 September 1939, 238; DE & IV Hansen, *With Wings: A Centenary History of Immanuel College, Adelaide, 1895-1995* (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1995).

refugee from Nazism, who arrived in Australia in 1940 to take up a position with UELCA.<sup>15</sup> Relations with Germany were also prohibited, and an explicit allegiance to Australia was demanded of Lutherans in general.<sup>16</sup> Thus, among other factors, the two world wars contributed significantly to distance Australian Lutherans from their German heritage.

It was against this backdrop that German migrants began arriving in Australia in the 1950s, to a somewhat tentative German community and a divided Lutheran Church in danger of losing its cultural and linguistic foundations after the effects of two world wars. Despite Australian Lutheranism's precarious position in 1945, Johann Peter Weiss, a postwar migrant himself, attributes the surviving elements of German culture and ethnicity in Australia to the Lutheran Church and its pastors.<sup>17</sup> For the Church the postwar period brought with it a chance at regeneration and a broadening of its congregational base while strengthening its European ties.

What becomes evident from a survey of Church correspondence between 1945 and 1955 is that while the Australian Government proceeded slowly towards an assisted German immigration scheme, it posed no opposition in general to the sponsoring of individual German migrants to Australia.<sup>18</sup> The Government recognised the political minefield that a large-scale German migration scheme would bring, but was confident of proceeding on a case by case basis in the immediate postwar years.<sup>19</sup> Still, in its early negotiations with both Australian Lutheran Synods, the Government remained sceptical about the value of their involvement in the wider immigration program.

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<sup>15</sup> Pastor Zinnbauer was raised as a Catholic, but subsequently trained and was ordained as a Lutheran Pastor near Vienna in 1936. While his mother was Catholic, Zinnbauer's father was Jewish and this rendered him a political refugee. He escaped Vienna for England in 1939 and arrived in Australia in 1940. Margaret Rilett, 'Zinnbauer, Alfred Freund- (1910–1978)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/zinnbauer-alfred-freund--12095/text21703>, accessed 22 June 2011.

<sup>16</sup> See Anthony M Kaukas, 'Internment in Australia, 1939-1946,' Honours thesis, University of Adelaide, 1983; and Charles Meyer, *A History of Germans in Australia 1839-1945* (Clayton: Monash University, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Johann Peter Weiss, *In Search of an Identity: Essays and Ideas on Anglo-Australians, Germans and others* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000), 383.

<sup>18</sup> A precedent had been set by the Government's 1948 classification of German nationals eligible for admission to Australia, as well as the Special Project and ESTEA migration schemes bringing German workers to Australia. See NAA: A445, 235/1/25. Letter to CMO Australia House London from Heyes, 27 September 1948, 1-2. Also refer to Appendix 1.3 for further discussion of the various migration schemes.

<sup>19</sup> NAA: A445, 194/2/4. Undated report, Department of Immigration, c.1951. See also Angelika Sauer, 'Model Workers or Hardened Nazis? The Australian Debate about Admitting German Migrants, 1950-1952,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 45 (1999), 422-437.

In 1947 the President General of UELCA, Johannes J Stolz, wrote to the Minister for Immigration seeking permission to distribute a German language 'welcome pamphlet' among the newly arriving Lutheran Displaced Persons. Minister Calwell was unflinching in his response. He informed Stolz that such pamphlets were unnecessary because most of these people had spent the past two years living in British and American camps, 'so will be familiar with English'. Calwell continued that he was:

anxious that these people should rapidly assimilate as Australians and in the circumstances I feel that the distribution of leaflets in a foreign language on the lines proposed by your organisation would not contribute to the objective we have in mind.<sup>20</sup>

Calwell's hard line assimilationist attitude was prevalent throughout all his correspondence with Stolz in the 1940s.<sup>21</sup> This resulted in a face to face meeting with Stolz in Canberra on 23 May 1949. Departmental Secretary Heyes compiled a five-page document in preparation for the meeting outlining the department's response to all questions raised in the correspondence to date. Discussion centered on the sponsoring of Baltic orphans and ethnic German refugees, the provision for Displaced Persons to send money to Europe, the qualifications of migrant doctors, secretarial support for a Lutheran Pastor stationed at Bonegilla Migrant Centre, and the sponsoring of German pastors and individual German nationals to migrate to Australia.<sup>22</sup> While Calwell's replies continually stressed the importance of the Government's desire to assimilate migrants rapidly, the meeting with Stolz proved fruitful for the Church, facilitating an exchange of information and the securing of landing permits for German nationals sponsored by the Church.

In 1948 both Lutheran Churches independently wrote to Calwell to gauge the possibility of sponsoring orphaned German and British children into 'good' Australian Lutheran homes. In both instances the response of the department was that involvement by the Church would be counter to the government's aims of assimilation. The government was concerned about either Church's involvement, especially UELCA's, as 'the applied for immigrant children would ... come under a somewhat Germanic type of influence which would not be calculated to hasten

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<sup>20</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218. Letter to Calwell from Reverend JJ Stolz, 24 September 1947.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* This correspondence numbers close to 100 letters, of which there seems to be at least one letter and one reply per month between Stolz, Heyes and Calwell for the period September 1947 to 1950.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*; 'Notes for interview with Reverend J.J. Stolz, at 11am on 23 May 1949', 1-5; see also Letter to Stolz from Heyes, 4 May 1950.

their assimilation in Australia in the way that a non-Lutheran organisation could ensure'.<sup>23</sup> The Church continued to encounter this departmental attitude during Calwell's time as Minister. Calwell's views were largely informed by reports furnished to him by Commonwealth security and migration officers. For example, on 30 March 1948, Director of the Commonwealth Investigation Services, Mr Longfield Lloyd, wrote to secretary Heyes that the 'United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia is very much bound up with Germany', cautioning the department on the decidedly political nature of the church.<sup>24</sup> The following year Senior Migration Officer FH Ordish informed Heyes of the less troubling political orientation of the ELCA, where 'practically all the affiliations and relations of this body are with the United States of America'.<sup>25</sup> Ordish furnished Heyes with evidence from the Deputy Director of Security in South Australia, writing that ELCA was 'contemplating sponsoring radio programmes in Australia, the discs to be used being supplied by the American Branch of the Church'. He contrasted this with UELCA who were 'affiliated with the Martin Luther League in Germany and with the Lutheran World Convention' and who had 'always laid great stress on its German connexions'. Ordish reinforced this with the fact that UELCA 'imported most of their literature from Germany and taught in both the German and English language'.<sup>26</sup> In preparing a memo on the political leanings of UELCA, Ordish cited the work of historian Charles A Price, and quoted UELCA's pre-war President who had written that 'National Socialism is an inherently proud movement for the salvation and reconstruction of a people ..... We are at the moment reading Adolf Hitler's book, "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle). Through it the man grows nearer and dearer to one'.<sup>27</sup> Ordish's report solidified in Calwell's mind the need to proceed cautiously where UELCA was concerned. This accounts for Calwell's concern that migrant children should not come under a 'Germanic type of influence' through exposure to the church. However, within the space of a few years, the government's attitude towards Lutheran sponsored migration changed significantly.

UELCA approaches to the government on issues of child migration, the *Volksdeutsche* refugee problem, where over seven million ethnic German refugees were expelled from their homes

<sup>23</sup> NAA: A436, 1950/5/1321. Letter to Heyes from L Lloyd, 30 March 1948; letter to Heyes from Armstrong, 13 July 1949. See also NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218. Letter to Calwell from Stolz, 11 August 1948 and 28 December 1947.

<sup>24</sup> NAA: A436, 1950/5/1321. Letter to Heyes from Lloyd, 30 March 1948.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, letter to Heyes from Ordish, 27 March 1949.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, though normal classes were only to be taught in English, those taking 'German' as a language subject were able to converse in German. Letter to Heyes from Ordish, 27 May 1949.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, memo to Department of Immigration from Ordish, 20 June 1946.

and registered in the western zones of occupied Europe between 1949 and 1949,<sup>28</sup> and the establishment of new Lutheran Schools in Australia were treated with suspicion by the Government because of the Church's perceived German outlook which was regarded as an impediment to migrant assimilation. While UELCA was of primary concern to the Government, for reasons of continuity the Department of Immigration felt it prudent to inform both Synods that while they could grant individual landing permits to acceptable migrants, they could not endorse a mass German migration scheme at that time.<sup>29</sup>

### **Lutheran responses to immigration: strengthening European ties**

Through membership of the international Lutheran community, both Lutheran churches in Australia were well informed of the European refugee situation during the early postwar years. UELCA in particular, owing to its affiliation with the European based Lutheran World Federation (LWF), could draw on a network of Lutheran Churches across the continent. ELCA, on the other hand, was officially associated with the Free Lutheran Church of the United States of America, which did not possess the same structural support of the LWF in Europe. It did, however, maintain links through member churches in Europe, enabling ELCA to stay abreast of the *Volksdeutsche* refugee situation. Lacking the infrastructure of the LWF to resettle such refugees, ELCA predominantly concerned itself with sending aid to Europe.<sup>30</sup> These affiliations enabled both synods to make contact with individual European churches, resulting in the provision of overseas aid, correspondence and visits to Germany, and the sponsoring and employment of European, and specifically German, pastors in Australia. This cultivated relationship culminated in early attempts by both synods to foster German Lutheran refugee migration to Australia. Better positioned in the European context and with the weight and financial backing of the LWF behind them, UELCA identified a severely disadvantaged refugee group crowding into Allied-occupied Germany, the ethnic German *Volksdeutsche* refugees. Chapter Four examines on a micro level the experience of a small group of these ethnic German refugees sponsored by the LWF and UELCA to migrate to Australia during the 1950s.

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 1.4 for further discussion of the ethnic German refugee situation in postwar Europe.

<sup>29</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218. Letter to Stolz from Heyes, 4 May 1950. Heyes wrote that no policy had been decided on but that the 'possibility is vague at this point'.

<sup>30</sup> ELCA was able to identify and sponsor individual German migrants with the help of its member churches in Germany on a case by case basis. The President of the ELCA also maintained professional links with the Theological Seminary in Oberursel, Germany, through which information and aid were distributed. LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 23 August 1950, 262.

The LWF, founded in 1947 in Sweden as a service for Lutheran refugees displaced as a result of the Second World War, remains a global organisation of Lutheran churches. In the immediate postwar years UECLA aligned itself with this Federation and UELCA Pastor, Bruno Muetzelfeldt, was appointed its Executive Officer in Australia. For over a decade Muetzelfeldt acted as liaison between the Church, the LWF, and the Australian Government. The ultimate goal of the LWF in Australia was to secure an assisted passage migration agreement for *Volksdeutsche* refugees and other German expellees along similar lines to those adopted by the Canadian and American Governments.<sup>31</sup> As we will see in Chapter Four, the LWF succeeded in bringing small numbers of these refugees to Australia. The LWF advocated for these refugees around the world, arguing that ethnic Germans had ‘no powerful International Refugee Organization supporting and maintaining them in camps in Europe, and representing them in practically every capital of the free world in order to have immigration doors opened’.<sup>32</sup> Europe’s displaced ethnic Germans did not fall under the auspices of the IRO and hence the Australian Government’s Displaced Persons immigration scheme. For this reason the ethnic German refugee situation came to the attention of UELCA.

In September 1950, Department of Immigration Acting Secretary, A Nutt, met with the Executive Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Dr Michelfelder, and Executive Officer Muetzelfeldt in Canberra. The agenda was the securing of an ethnic German resettlement scheme in Australia. Acting Secretary Nutt informed Michelfelder of the Department’s position - that the Government alone was responsible for the selection, transport, accommodation and employment of migrants in Australia, and that the Commonwealth ‘did not use denominational or other agencies for immigration purposes in the same way as the U.S.A.’.<sup>33</sup> During this meeting Nutt acknowledged the LWF’s extensive reach throughout western Germany, noting they were in a good position ‘to advise on those *Volksdeutsche* and Expellees most suitable for settlement here’. Michelfelder and Muetzelfeldt had made a favourable impression on Nutt:

The aim of his [Michelfelder’s] Federation from a resettlement point of view is not to encourage nationalistic German groups in other countries nor to sponsor Lutheran Churches which retain German nationalistic along with religious ideals. Rather does it

<sup>31</sup> NAA: A445/1, 194/3/1. Reuben C Baetz, *Lutheran World Federation: Service to Refugees 1947-1952*.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>33</sup> NAA: A445, 194/3/9. Report of A Nutt, ‘Lutheran World Federation - Offer to assist with German emigration to Australia’, 21 September 1950, 1.

wish to extend a helping hand to Lutherans, who have suffered through the exigencies of war, and to encourage them to assimilate in their new countries and to preserve their spiritual faith.

Nutt concluded that Dr Michelfelder's 'offer of the cooperation of the Lutheran World Federation in any scheme of German migration to Australia is made from none other than altruistic motives', and that should a German assisted passage scheme be introduced in Australia, the Government 'may be able to accept his kind offer of the advice and guidance of the Lutheran World Federation organisation in Germany'.<sup>34</sup> To this end, in December 1950, Muetzelfeldt embarked on a month-long trip to Europe, sponsored by the LWF and the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Muetzelfeldt met with European Church officials and toured Displaced Person camps to assess the viability of a German refugee migration scheme for Australia.<sup>35</sup> Such a scheme did eventuate but not until 1953, after the signing of a bilateral agreement with the West German Government.

The 1953 sponsorship scheme of the LWF and UELCA, the Lutheran World Federation Sponsorship Scheme (LWFSS), was designed along similar lines to the West German Assisted Passage scheme.<sup>36</sup> In December 1953, Minister Holt wrote to UELCA that he hoped the scheme would be 'the means of our receiving increasing numbers of your fellow countrymen in Australia'.<sup>37</sup> The LWFSS sought to assist German migrants who were ineligible for the West German Assisted Passage Scheme, such as those with large families or occupations not desirable to the Australian Government.<sup>38</sup> However, the lengthy application and sponsorship process, an eventual relaxing of restrictions on the West German Assisted Passage scheme,

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<sup>34</sup> NAA (ACT): A445, 194/3/9, Report of A Nutt, 'Lutheran World Federation - Offer to assist with German emigration to Australia', 21 September 1950, 1.

<sup>35</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, 1951, Stolz, 'Board of Immigration, 1951', 92-93. See also LAA: *Lutheran Herald*, 25 November 1950, 376.

<sup>36</sup> NAA: A445/1, 194/3/1, letter to Muetzelfeldt from Heyes, February 1953.

<sup>37</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218, letter to Proeve from Holt, December 1953.

<sup>38</sup> NAA: A445/1, 194/3/1, letter to Muetzelfeldt from Heyes, February 1953. To satisfy these landing criteria the Church had to find sponsors for individual migrants, with promises of employment and accommodation on arrival. A landing permit could then be granted by the Government, providing the migrant satisfied all security and political screening issues. These migrants paid their own fares to Australia and were prohibited from travelling on IRO ships. The Church's major contribution came in the form of congregational appeals for jobs and sponsors, for donations to a travel loans fund, and the administering of these loans repayments. Through the LWF Service to Refugees, loans were advanced with the sponsor providing a small deposit and the migrant repaying the loan in due course. The Government slightly eased the financial burden of this scheme when they agreed to cover the migrants' rail and initial accommodation costs on arrival in Australia after 31 December 1958. See also NAA: A2567, 1961/96A, letter to Muetzelfeldt from Heyes, 4 December 1958.

and the financial implications of non-assisted migration meant that by August 1953 no families had emigrated under the LWFSS.<sup>39</sup>

The bilateral West German Assisted Passage Agreement was implemented only months before the Australian Government gave permission for the LWFSS to sponsor Germans to migrate to Australia. Consequently the LWF had a reduced migrant base to draw from within West Germany. These reduced numbers coupled with the Australian government's relaxing of assisted passage requirements in subsequent years saw more German migrants absorbed through the Assisted Passage scheme.<sup>40</sup> The LWF and UELCA were frustrated by the lack of success of their scheme, lamenting their diminished chances of identifying 'lost' Lutherans through the Government system. While beneficial to individual migrants unable to reach Australia any other way, the LWFSS was numerically unimportant in the larger scheme of Australia's postwar immigration program. What it does reveal though, is the churches' early forays into European immigration and their desire to strengthen Australian Lutheranism's German heritage while simultaneously serving the international Lutheran community.

Between 1948 and 1952, the LWF resettled 233 migrants Australia wide.<sup>41</sup> In this same period the Australian Government had issued 5,000 entry visas to German Special Projects workers,<sup>42</sup> and from 1952 the bilateral assisted passage agreement saw between 5,000 and 10,000 new arrivals each year.<sup>43</sup> While many of these migrants were potentially of the Lutheran faith, it was through Church assisted migration that adherents were more easily identified. Still, the LWFSS accounted for such a small percentage of overall German arrivals as to be numerically inconsequential to the Australian postwar German and Lutheran communities. In comparison, the UELCA Board of Immigration, through its European contacts, estimated that the percentage of Lutherans among assisted German migrants could be as high as fifty per cent.<sup>44</sup> However, this does not imply the insignificance of the LWFSS to Lutheranism in Australia. On the contrary, the arrival of ethnic German refugees in Australia presented the church with a unique opportunity to galvanise its historical German origins in Australia, thereby reinforcing

<sup>39</sup> NAA: A445/1, 194/3/1, letter to CMO Cologne from Heyes, 18 August 1953; see also subsequent correspondence between CMO and Heyes during August and September 1953.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, correspondence between Heyes, CMO Cologne and Muetzfeldt, August to September 1953, especially 18 August 1953.

<sup>41</sup> NAA: A445/1, 194/3/1. Baetz, *LWF*, 53.

<sup>42</sup> Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 91.

<sup>43</sup> NAA: A1838, 1531/72 PART 1, unsigned memo, 19 March 1957.

<sup>44</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1951, 93.



a sense of historical continuity and identity. In their work of sponsoring ethnic German refugees, the two Lutheran churches in Australia sought to strengthen their German Lutheran identities while fulfilling their moral and spiritual duty to fellow Lutherans.

The motives of the Lutheran Church in Australia were therefore not altogether altruistic.<sup>45</sup> Both synods saw in the European refugee crisis an opportunity to help people in need, but also to reinvigorate and strengthen their flagging memberships, in much the same way as the Australian Government looked upon the Displaced Persons scheme as a means of obtaining cheap, directable labour. The LWFSS is evidence of this, where those sponsored by the scheme incurred significant financial burdens and ties to the Church. However, in the broader picture, both synods' work in the field of immigration and migrant settlement is demonstrative of a charitable and spiritual disposition rather than an opportunistic recruitment drive. The stated policy of UELCA towards migrants in 1947 was:

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia realises her obligation to care for those new-comers .... [and] regards it as her duty to bring to the migrants the saving Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. She will do this with particular attendance to the special needs of migrants.<sup>46</sup>

As we will see, these religious overtones soon gave way to more pragmatic forms of assistance by way of pastoral care.

### **Lutheran responses to assimilation: collaborative relationships**

The government's diminishing concerns over the strong German tone of Lutheranism in Australia coincided with its pragmatic realisation that DP and British migration alone could not deliver the numbers originally envisaged by its immigration program. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapters One and Two, the government also recognised its inability to effectively implement migrant settlement and assimilation policies, charging instead community organisations with this task.<sup>47</sup> To this end the Department of Immigration also utilised Australian religious organisations, placing pastors at its migrant holding centers to minister to newly arriving migrants and facilitate their settlement into local communities. By 1948

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<sup>45</sup> Johann Weiss argues this in his broad study focusing substantially on Germans and the Lutheran Church in Australia. See Weiss, *In Search of an Identity*.

<sup>46</sup> NAA: A436, 1950/5/1321, Policy of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia for her Work among Immigrants, c.1947.

<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of the changing attitudes to German migration also see Sauer, 'Model Workers or Hardened Nazis,' 422-437.

provision had been made for both the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church to station chaplains and pastors at Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Holding Centre. These church officers were afforded free lodgings and board for their work with migrants.<sup>48</sup> On the appointment of Pastor Muetzelfeldt to Bonegilla in 1948, Calwell wrote to President Stolz, expressing his appreciation for the involvement of the church, which he now believed would ‘greatly assist in not only providing for their [migrants’] spiritual needs but also in facilitating their rapid assimilation as Australian citizens’.<sup>49</sup> Pastor Muetzelfeldt tirelessly served the Bonegilla migrant population for twelve years until 1960.<sup>50</sup>

Integration of religious and pastoral support at migrant processing centres soon became widespread. Within a month of Muetzelfeldt’s appointment to Bonegilla, Calwell acceded to requests from UELCA to place another pastor at the Bathurst migrant camp in New South Wales.<sup>51</sup> These placements are indicative of the Department of Immigration’s wider approach to migrant assimilation throughout the 1950s. We have already witnessed through the work of the ACCs and departmental social workers the Department of Immigration’s progressive move towards entrusting local community groups with the nationally important task of migrant assimilation. To this end the government also harnessed the Church’s offers of assistance in receiving and settling migrants. However, as with all of its community coordination in the postwar years, the Department of Immigration sought to regulate and control community responses through the ACCs, the CIAC, and as we will see in Chapter Five, the GNM of Australia.

The Australian government’s recognition that assimilation policy could only be effected through community implementation at a grass roots level outweighed any lingering departmental prejudices towards Lutheranism in Australia. By 1953 pastors were resident in

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<sup>48</sup> By 1958 there were three chaplains resident at Bonegilla, with a further three visiting chaplains living in the local area. Those resident were Pastor Muetzelfeldt, Father B von Stokkom (Dutch Catholic Priest), and Father Krewenka (Yugoslav-Austrian Catholic Priest). The visiting chaplains were a Dutch missionary, and Anglican and Baptist Ministers. NAA: A2567, 1958/83A, letter to Heyes from Henry Guinn, Director, Bonegilla, 8 September 1958.

<sup>49</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218, letter to Stolz from Calwell, 3 January 1948.

<sup>50</sup> Johan P Weiss, *A Short General and Statistical History of the Australian Lutheran Church* (Adelaide, 1999), 320.

<sup>51</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5281, letter to Stolz from Calwell, 19 February 1948; see also letter to Calwell from Stolz, 3 February 1948. Interestingly, this led Pastor Hoopman, President of ELCA, to contact the Department of Immigration with a similar request. Heyes replied to Hoopman, after receiving a complaint from Stolz about the ELCA request, that ‘the Lutherans are already adequately taken care of’ in the camps. See letters to Heyes from Hoopman, 27 May 1948, Stolz to Heyes, 27 May 1948, and Heyes to Hoopman, 3 June 1948.

all major migrant camps and had begun also ministering to German migrants on ships en route to Australia.<sup>52</sup> It was not just the government who had begun to realise the magnitude of the work ahead of them. Both Lutheran synods were equally aware of the large undertaking in providing settlement and pastoral support to European migrants and sought increasingly to cooperate in the field.<sup>53</sup> As we will see, this realisation marked the beginning of subtle structural changes in both synods, ultimately culminating in their amalgamation in 1966.

Very early in the immigration program the two Lutheran Churches established immigration boards to deal more effectively with the tasks ahead of them. As the numbers of Lutheran migrant arrivals increased, both synods increasingly pooled their efforts and found ways to work together. Early evidence of this cooperation occurred at a joint meeting in August 1949 where the ELCA Migrant Mission Board met with a commission of UECLA, including Pastor Muetzelfeldt. The meeting was reported in ELCA's nationally distributed publication the *Australian Lutheran*, informing congregations that 'in view of the great task confronting both Churches, the desirability of preventing overlapping and unfruitful competition was duly stressed'. At the heart of this early cooperation between the two synods was the realisation that a divided church was confusing for migrants and not conducive to increasing memberships. The 1949 joint meeting therefore concluded that the ultimate goal should be 'one Lutheran Church in Australia'.<sup>54</sup>

In November 1950 UELCA announced the formation of its Board of Immigration after holding its first meeting in Adelaide on 26 October 1950. The Board consisted of representatives from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and the Executive Migration Officer, a position which Pastor Muetzelfeldt later accepted.<sup>55</sup> The Board reviewed the field of immigration work within its sphere of influence, including the recruitment of pastors from Germany and the production and supply of literature to newly arrived migrants. In its first year of operation UELCA President Stolz articulated the growing emphasis on and need for pastoral care amongst migrants: 'Besides the case for the spiritual

<sup>52</sup> LAA: Minutes of the Immigration Board UELCA 1949-66, manila folder. Minutes of the Immigration Board UELCA, 7-14.9.1953. Pastor Bruno Muetzelfeldt had successfully negotiated this with the ICEM and the Australian Government. See also NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218, letter to Holt from Proeve, 17 November 1953.

<sup>53</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218, letter to Heyes from Stolz, 29 August 1948; letter to Calwell from Stolz, 29 August 1948, 1-3.

<sup>54</sup> LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 'Church News', 24 August 1949, 245.

<sup>55</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, 1951. Stolz, Report of the Board of Immigration, 93. See also *Lutheran Herald*, 25 November 1950, 376.

side of this work, in keeping in contact with pastors, in assisting the local congregations, in preaching at preaching places, much work of the welfare nature had been done.’<sup>56</sup> Stolz noted that the Church had a great task ahead and that ‘despite disappointments there is much that encourages. It is so fine to help people in need. If only more could be done, particularly in heart-rending cases!’<sup>57</sup> Thus a spirit of cooperation and early recognition of the need for pastoral care rather than spiritual guidance, in the first instance at least, dominated the early work of both immigration boards. Addressing the settlement and pastoral needs of migrants did not put the Lutheran synods at odds with the government’s policy of assimilation. Rather the churches’ approach was in keeping with the government’s desire for assimilation to be effected on the ground by well-meaning personal approaches to migrants.

Both immigration boards held individual and joint meetings on a regular basis, often in Victoria. At one such joint meeting in January 1952 there was a call for the appointment of an inter-church migration committee with the following goals: to work together for the migrants, present a united front when dealing with the Government, publish a joint leaflet for new migrants, and avoid overlapping as much as possible.<sup>58</sup> This new Inter-Church Migration Committee met for the first time a month later, in February 1952, and set about reviewing the existing roles of the two established migrant boards. At this time it was revealed Pastor Mutzelfeldt of UELCA had secured the approval of the Australian Government and the IRO to place Lutheran pastors aboard IRO ships carrying German assisted passage migrants to Australia. The Inter-Church Migration Committee recommended that, in the interests of cooperation and coordination of services, the two Lutheran synods take it in turns providing pastors for these ships.<sup>59</sup>

At a further meeting in January 1953 both immigration boards resolved to ‘prosecute the work among migrants in the spirit of harmony and cooperation’. It further recognised that while both Churches had the right to work with migrants, ‘overlapping should be avoided as much as possible, and local pastors should endeavour to work in harmony with each other’.<sup>60</sup> A good example of this comes in the form of a joint welcome pamphlet titled ‘Australian Lutherans

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<sup>56</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1951. Stolz, Report of the Board of Immigration, 93.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, 93.

<sup>58</sup> LAA: Immigration Folder [miscellaneous correspondence]. Minutes of Meeting of Inter-Church Migration Committee, 5 February 1952.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, Australia, 1953, 114.

Greet the New-Comers'.<sup>61</sup> It was published 'in line with the policy of both Boards which saw to it that the two Presidents issued a joint greeting'.<sup>62</sup> In South Australia these pamphlets were handed out to German migrants disembarking at Outer Harbour, or in Victoria to those disembarking from the train at Bonegilla. By the end of 1953 the South Australian UELCA's state synod reported favourably on the cooperation of the two churches: 'notable feature of the year was that the relationship of the UELCA and ELCA has been harmonious'.<sup>63</sup> Cooperation between the two Lutheran Churches in the field of migration continued throughout the decade, but not without some difficulties.

### **A sense of community: effective communication**

Both Synods used their monthly and bi-monthly Church publications as an effective way to communicate their refugee and migrant work to the wider Australian Lutheran community. ELCA's *Australian Lutheran* was published from 1913, while UELCA's *Lutheran Herald* was published from 1921. Both publications ceased in 1966, replaced by *The Lutheran* in January 1967 issued by the newly amalgamated Lutheran Church of Australia. UELCA's monthly subscription-based *Lutheran Herald* often included appeals to its Australian congregations for donations of 'generous support' to the LWF Relief Funds for refugees.<sup>64</sup> The Church communicated its work with the LWF through the *Lutheran Herald*, keeping its members informed of the refugee situation in Europe throughout the early 1950s and eliciting their support by way of food, clothing and monetary donations.<sup>65</sup> In 1950 the Church published an article from the Reverend John Scherzer of the National Lutheran Council in Europe pleading for 'the full support of our pastors and congregations towards Lutheran World Action and Lutheran World Relief'.<sup>66</sup> Similarly the publication kept its subscribers informed of happenings closer to home, as in the case of ethnic German refugees sponsored by the Church

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<sup>61</sup> LAA: Immigration Folder [miscellaneous correspondence] 1950-53. 'Australian Lutherans Greet the New-Comers', undated, c.1952. This was a joint pamphlet published in English and German. It contained a welcome greeting from the two Presidents of the Lutheran Church, and was issued free to newly arrived German immigrants. See also earlier c.1950-51 joint pamphlet 'Welcome! Willkommen!', which included information about the two Lutheran Churches and contact names and addresses of pastors in the various states of Australia, LAA: Immigration Folder [miscellaneous correspondence] 1950-53.

<sup>62</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1953, 71.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>64</sup> LAA: *Lutheran Herald*, 29 April 1950, 134-135.

<sup>65</sup> For example see LAA: *Lutheran Herald*. Reverend John A Scherzer, 'Is it really so bad?', 29 April 1950, 134-135; Pastor PA Scherer 'New Australians Fellow-Lutherans', 313-316; 30 September 1950; 'Church in Action', 376, 12 May 1951; TJ Kleinhaus, 'Passage Loans to *Volksdeutsche*', 133-134, 10 May 1952.

<sup>66</sup> LAA: *Lutheran Herald*. Reverend Scherzer, 'Is it really so bad?', 135.

and its members to migrate to South Australia.<sup>67</sup> It was also common for UELCA pastors to submit pieces for publication in the *Lutheran Herald* highlighting their work amongst migrant communities in Australia. UELCA's Board of Immigration had identified this publication as a good means of raising awareness of the migrant situation amongst the Lutheran community.<sup>68</sup> Through such mechanisms UELCA fostered a tangible link between both the migrant and the church, as well as between the migrant, the Australian Lutheran community and the Australian government.

ELCA similarly used its bi-monthly subscription-based publication *Australian Lutheran* to appeal to its congregational members in support of Lutheran refugees and German migrants. In January 1951, ELCA informed its members that through the *Hilfswerk*, a member church welfare body, it had forwarded money, clothing, and food parcels to refugees in Germany. In return the Church had received many 'touching letters of gratitude'.<sup>69</sup> Praising the generosity of its congregations, ELCA reminded its readers that 'our relief work should not be relaxed. Our abundance should still supply the want of others'.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the publication reported on the fostering of international Lutheran relationships such as with the Oberursel Seminary in Germany. Having raised money from its Australian congregations, ELCA funded a teaching position at the Seminary to 'assist in the rehabilitation of the Lutheran Church in war stricken areas'.<sup>71</sup> As well as reinforcing the Church's international Lutheran ties, ELCA similarly focused relief efforts closer to home, providing practical assistance to Australia's postwar Lutheran migrant community. One such example comes from an article entitled 'A helping hand for new Australians' which reported on a migrant family that had been advanced a church loan to build their family home.<sup>72</sup> Thus, both UELCA and ELCA used their national publications to impress on members the churches' responsibility to the international Lutheran community as well as the need for localized assistance to migrants establishing themselves within the Australian Lutheran community. This method of communication and the churches' direct relationships with the international Lutheran community would continue to be integral to the approach of both synods throughout the 1950s.

<sup>67</sup> LAA: *Lutheran Herald*. 'Church in Action', 25 November 1950, 376.

<sup>68</sup> LAA: Minutes of the Immigration Board of UELCA, 1949-1966. Minutes of meeting, 28-30 January 1950, 6.

<sup>69</sup> LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 24 January 1951, 21.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 21.

<sup>71</sup> LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 'Church News', 24 August 1949, 245.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, 'A Helping Hand for New Australians', 24 August 1949, 295; see also 183-184 of the same issue where it is reported that loans of between £70 and £300 have been advanced to migrants by ELCA. The publication calls for more donations from members to continue this assistance to migrants.

The *Migrant Messenger*, a type of newsletter, was initiated by ELCA's Migrant Board and began monthly national circulation in April 1950.<sup>73</sup> Issued at no charge, the *Migrant Messenger's* stated purpose was 'to provide readers with wholesome food for the soul, to supply church news, and to inform of services of the church in various places'.<sup>74</sup> The *Migrant Messenger* was initially published in English, German, Estonian and Latvian, but by the mid-1950s consisted almost solely of German language text. Between 1950 and 1952 the *Migrant Messenger* published a series of English language installments on the history of the Lutheran Church in Australia. This series covered, among other things, the establishment of Lutheran settlements in Hahndorf, the Barossa Valley, Klemzig, Glen Osmond, and Lobethal.<sup>75</sup> Once again, the heritage of Lutheranism in Australia and the struggles of the early Lutheran settlers were presented to give new migrants a sense of the relationship between the past, present and future of the Lutheran Church in Australia.

The monthly *Migrant Messenger* cultivated a distinct community among its migrant readers. With a readership base of some 2,000 in 1951, it continued to grow with the arrival of German Assisted Passage migrants from 1952 onwards.<sup>76</sup> In May of that year, the editor informed readers that increasing numbers of German arrivals necessitated the calling of a Lutheran pastor from Germany who would be stationed in Melbourne.<sup>77</sup> The publication espoused distinct German traditions and included regular information sections such as the '*Kirchliche Nachrichten*' which, for example, gave news of widowed families in West Germany and of the many parents still searching for their lost children as a result of the war and displacement. The publication also reported on the visit of President Hoopman to Germany to attend the Lutheran World Federation Assembly as an invited guest. Readers were informed that 'while in

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<sup>73</sup> In 1952 the UELCA Board of Immigration discussed distributing a similar church paper in the German language. This did not eventuate until 1956, after the first wave of German assisted passage migration was complete. In the interim, UELCA relied on *The Lutheran Herald* to reach a wide audience. This was of limited appeal to migrants because of the annual subscription fees. LAA: Minutes of the Immigration Board of UELCA, 1949-66. Minutes of Meeting held 7-9 February 1956.

<sup>74</sup> LAA: Migrant Messenger Box, October 1950 - December 1958. *Migrant Messenger*, v.1 no. 7 (October, 1950), 1. This paper later changed its name to the *Lutheran Messenger* in 1960 after a two-year absence, it was distributed four times per year and still heavy with German language content. See LAA: Lutheran Messenger Box, April 1960 - December 1970.

<sup>75</sup> See LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.1, no. 9 (December, 1950), 4; v.2, no. 6 (July, 1951), 3; v.2, no. 7 (August, 1951), 3-4; v.2, no. 8 (September, 1951); v.2, no. 9 (October, 1951), 3; v.2, no. 11 (December - January, 1951-52); v.3, no. 1 (February, 1952); v.3, no. 2 (March, 1952), 4; v.3, no. 5 (June, 1952), 4; v.3, no. 9 (October, 1952), 3.

<sup>76</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.2, no. 4 (May, 1951), 4.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*, v.3, no. 4 (May, 1952), 4.

Germany he will also attend a World Conference of Churches in fellowship with our church, at Uelzen, and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church at Berlin'.<sup>78</sup> In August 1954 the *Migrant Messenger* advertised that it was importing 'musical manger' Christmas sets from Germany for migrants to buy, directing interested readers to the Lutheran Publishing House in Adelaide for purchases.<sup>79</sup> From 1956 the *Migrant Messenger* also included a small English language instruction section entitled 'Wie heisst das auf Englisch?' to help migrants with everyday English skills.<sup>80</sup> It also contained specifically targeted articles such as pleas for financial help in sponsoring the families of young Special Project German workers on the Victorian Railways in August 1952, information on the new Government Health Benefits scheme, and a list of church recommended societies in 1953.<sup>81</sup> The paper contained no heavy assimilationist rhetoric and it is evident from these examples that ELCA concerned itself with practical assistance to meet the spiritual, social and economic needs of its migrant congregational members. This example reveals the church as an established grass roots provider of assistance to migrants. It demonstrates the churches' role in postwar assimilation as one of coordination and direct service provision to best meet the needs of migrants.

The congregational publications of ELCA and UELCA provide numerous examples of both synods' commitment to welfare support, charitable duty, and the general provision of pastoral care to migrants. As we will see, these roles, encouraged by the national synods and implemented at the local congregational level, were integral to the churches' early responses to migrants. While the historical and linguistic foundations of Australian Lutheranism undoubtedly played some role in the Churches' attraction of German migrants, it was the practical assistance rather than spiritual guidance that impacted immediately on the broader migrant experience. The Bonegilla Congregational Committee recognised the importance of this approach, writing to UELCA in 1950 that:

they come to [the pastor] with innumerable questions and perplexities which are by no means connected with a clergyman's duties .... If he can't give them the correct

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<sup>78</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, 'Church News', v.3, no. 6 (July, 1952), 3.

<sup>79</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.4, no. 7 (August, 1954), 4.

<sup>80</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.5, no. 2 (October, 1955); v.6, no. 5 (September, 1956) onwards. 'Wie heisst das auf Englisch?' translates approximately to 'What is that called in English?' and was essentially a German to English Word Chart.

<sup>81</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.3, no. 7 (August, 1952); v.3, no. 7 (August, 1953).



answers and explanations, they lose confidence and there will be little chance of any approach to spiritual matters by either party.<sup>82</sup>

At first point of contact, the pastors' immediate priorities were of a practical nature. The UELCA Synod Report for South Australia in 1950 noted that pastoral care was being undertaken in the interests of spiritual work. It listed the nature of the support given, including assistance with bringing relatives to Australia, provision of interpreting services for migrants and Government officials, the obtaining of financial assistance for the erection of family homes, and the placing of wives and children in the country.<sup>83</sup> Pastor Pachur, of the ELCA migrant *Bethlehem Kirche*, was keenly aware of the importance of pastoral work in his approach to migrants. Pachur reported in the nationally distributed *Migrant Messenger*, 'hours upon hours of the pastor's time go into all manner of practical aid problems. Accommodation, employment, building, passages from Europe, land and language problems come almost every day'. He also touched on the opening of a specific dialogue and cooperation with the Australian Government and other community bodies engaged in the field of migrant settlement, recording that 'a daily average of 14 phone calls come from government departments and welfare bodies asking for help, advice and attendance'. Specific problems encountered by migrants in the settlement process also added substantially to Pachur's more familiar pastoral duties, such as marriage counselling. Pachur wrote in 1954, 'unhappy and broken marriages keep the pastor busy deep into the night'.<sup>84</sup> This is particularly important as it supports what we have already learnt through the early work of departmental social workers, that emigration and settlement contributed to familial and social stresses amongst the migrant community. The extra workload of the pastor was not only important in terms of both churches attracting and retaining new migrant members, but also in the sense that they acted as a settlement aid for the migrant, a bridge between the migrants' social, religious and civic lives; a role that, it would seem, grew organically within the church while simultaneously serving the government's policy of migrant assimilation.

Closely tied to the importance of pastoral care was a perceived lack of faith of many newly arriving migrants. Both Lutheran synods referred to this in Church circulars, papers,

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<sup>82</sup> LAA: Immigration Folder [miscellaneous correspondence] 1950-53. Letter to Church Council UELCA from Bonegilla Congregational Committee, 3 November 1950.

<sup>83</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, South Australia, 1950, 72.

<sup>84</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.4, no. 1 (February, 1954), 4.

correspondence, and annual synod reports. UELCA's Pastor Scherer of Victoria reported his experiences with postwar Lutheran migrants to readers of the *Lutheran Herald* in 1950:

Their religious convictions are gone, their moral judgements are warped; the battle against sin has been too strong for them. Their spirits have been lying too long broken before being healed. Their family life has been cruelly disrupted. Their minds have been demoralized through evil associations.<sup>85</sup>

Pastor Scherer appealed to the Australian Lutheran community to help these 'lost souls' by fostering 'a better understanding of them' and by gaining 'their confidence and friendship'.<sup>86</sup> Scherer also touched on the need to meet the migrants' practical as well as spiritual concerns, observing from his work in Melbourne that 'there are so many personal problems in the lives of these people which demand a solution'.<sup>87</sup> The freely distributed *Migrant Messenger* called more than once for migrants 'to remain loyal to their Lutheran faith and church which are founded upon God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure. If you have not already done so, contact a Lutheran pastor immediately'.<sup>88</sup> However, the Church also encountered zealous adherents in their work amongst migrants. In 1952 the *Migrant Messenger* reported on 100 young German migrants living in the Footscray area of Melbourne, who walked two miles to church and back each week. These young men were 'helping to increase the membership and attendance at Melbourne Luther Society meetings' and many had expressed their willingness 'to assist members of the Footscray congregation with the building of their proposed new church'.<sup>89</sup> Still, there were many more instances of indifference.

Pastor Alfred Zinnbauer of the UELCA Adelaide Migrant Mission hinted at possible causes of a lack of faith in the migrant community. As we will see later in the chapter, Zinnbauer worked tirelessly amongst the migrant population of Adelaide through his position as Lutheran city missionary. Zinnbauer reported his experiences thus far to the Church: 'It is only natural that people have been upset by their continual wanderings and the camp life.' Zinnbauer continually came across a degree of 'indifferentism and we must not blind ourselves to the fact that some people might attend the church services and functions, because of the personal popularity of the minister, advantages from membership and the provision of a meeting place

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<sup>85</sup> LAA: *Lutheran Herald*. Pastor PA Scherer, 'New Australian, Fellow Lutherans', 30 September 1950, 313-314.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*, 315.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*, 314.

<sup>88</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.3, no. 5 (June, 1952), 4.

<sup>89</sup> LAA: *Migrant Messenger*, v.3, no. 6 (July, 1952), 3.

of the nationals'. Zinnbauer recommended that more be done to meet the pastoral needs of migrants, including 'more intensified house-visiting' as well as 'children's and youth work' and ultimately through the 'training of migrant pastors'.<sup>90</sup> Both churches faced a difficult task in ministering to postwar migrants. The provision of pastoral care and practical aid was thus an effective means of establishing contact and forming meaningful relationships with Australia's postwar migrants.

One postwar German migrant to South Australia described how a lack of religious faith was keenly felt by her generation who had grown up during Hitler's Third Reich. In her unpublished manuscript lodged at the State Library of South Australia, postwar migrant Gertrud Simon documents her childhood in Germany and her family's faith in Christianity. Simon also recounts her admission into the Nazi youth movement for girls and how on her graduation to the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* much pomp and ceremony was displayed by the State and by her peers. She compared this with her confirmation ceremony, which occurred at around the same time. On her confirmation she received no recognition from the State, and had only a small quiet celebration at home with her family. As an impressionable child she deduced that her involvement in Nazi youth movements was more important than religion in German society and subsequently the religious confirmation ceremony had held very little significance for her.<sup>91</sup>

Another striking example of this lack of faith is that of a group of young German railway workers who were being tended to by ELCA migrant pastor, Max Pachur. Through the *Australian Lutheran*, Pachur called on Church members to donate teaching materials and German bibles for the religious instruction and confirmation of these German men, as many were 'not confirmed, some of them not even baptised'.<sup>92</sup> These men were Special Project German workers, and as such their average age was about twenty-two.<sup>93</sup> In 1952 Pachur wrote of the German railway workers, in an article titled 'Work among Migrants in Adelaide', that they were 'mostly of Lutheran descent and in a special manner needing our pastoral and charitable care'. He pleaded with his fellow Lutherans to open their hearts and homes to these

<sup>90</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, Board of Immigration Files, Folder [312-950], Immigration Correspondence 1950-51. Pastor A Zinnbauer, Annual Report, 1950, 9.

<sup>91</sup> SLSA: Mortlock Library. Gertrud Simon, 'From Ten to Thirty, 1940 to 1970,' v.2 (unpublished manuscript, c.1975), 49-50.

<sup>92</sup> LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 21 May 1952, 149.

<sup>93</sup> For further demographical information on these German men see Appendix 1, esp. 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9.

‘waifs’ so that ‘some of the bitter and hardening experiences of the past [would] be removed by the Christian love of fellow-Lutherans in their new home’.<sup>94</sup> Pachur sought to build for these young German men a sense of community around the Lutheran Church. He took 166 of them on a tour of the Adelaide Hills and Lobethal areas to acquaint them with the early history of Lutheranism in Australia. He arranged for a further sixty-six German workers to journey to Hahndorf as guests of the Hahndorf Luther Society. Pachur stressed the importance of such excursions for the young German migrants as they were ‘as yet strangers in our country and only superficially acquainted with the Lutheran Church’.<sup>95</sup> Pachur’s approach to welcoming and supporting these migrants is demonstrative of the wider pragmatic pastoral approach of both Lutheran synods in the postwar years. It is evident that the church faced an uphill battle to receive postwar migrants, so much so that it ignored the government’s heavy assimilationist rhetoric in favour of a more pragmatic approach to pastoral and spiritual care. This approach was multifaceted, enabling the church to cultivate relationships with individual migrants through the provision of pastoral care while subsequently meeting its spiritual imperative.

### **New and old Australians: the changing structure of the church**

Across Australia many Lutheran Pastors worked tirelessly amongst the migrant community. Between 1945 and 1966 the state of Victoria had by far the largest number of postwar German migrant congregations. A total of six were located in Melbourne, Footscray, Boronia, Ringwood, Springvale and Thomastown.<sup>96</sup> In New South Wales two specifically German migrant congregations were in operation, one in Sydney and one in Chester Hill.<sup>97</sup> UELCA pastor, CW Stolz devoted his postwar years to visiting some twenty-seven hostels and camps in and around Sydney alone. Stolz worked tirelessly amongst the migrant community, ministering to his migrant congregation until 1985.<sup>98</sup> In the Snowy Mountains, the Hydro-Electric Commission’s migrant worker camps were visited by UELCA’s Pastor Wittwer, who initiated at least fourteen services in the area.<sup>99</sup> South Australia and Queensland recorded four German congregations each. In Queensland these were located in Brisbane, Mount Isa,

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<sup>94</sup> LAA: *Australian Lutheran*. Rev MOR Pachur, ‘Work Among Migrants in Adelaide’, 7 May 1952, 135-136.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*, 136.

<sup>96</sup> Weiss, *Statistical History*, 321-22.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, 314.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, 311.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*, 312.

Southport and Woolloongabba.<sup>100</sup> In South Australia there were two in Adelaide, one in Albert Park and one in North Adelaide.<sup>101</sup> Finally Western Australia counted one German migrant congregation in the capital of Perth.<sup>102</sup> The isolated state of Tasmania recorded no specifically German migrant congregations, but ELCA pastors WH Paech and AW Wundersitz initiated and ministered to no less than seventeen different migrant centres on the island between 1949 and 1955.<sup>103</sup> An examination of these congregations affords us a better understanding of how Australian Lutheranism responded to postwar immigration and, in turn how the migrant presence effected structural change.

To enable an in-depth analysis of the activities of migrant congregations we will now return to the micro study of South Australia's German migrant community. The Migrant Database tells us that the bulk of the postwar German migrant community emigrated under the West German Assisted Passage Agreement. The community was largely stable in terms of gender and was demographically quite young and family orientated. These German migrants, by and large, intended to settle permanently in Australia.<sup>104</sup> In South Australia two pastors were particularly prominent in welcoming and ministering to these German migrants. They were Pastor Pachur of ELCA and Pastor Zinnbauer of UELCA. Pastor Pachur's metropolitan *Bethlehem Kirche* migrant congregation was founded on 13 May 1951 by Dr Nichterlein and Pastor Lutze. Initially Pastor Lutze held fortnightly services in the German language for the congregation's Displaced Person and German members.<sup>105</sup> From 1952, with the appointment of Pastor Pachur, a new migrant himself, weekly services were given in the German language. However, the dispersal of the congregation's Displaced Person members, as well as the introduction of the West German Assisted Passage scheme in 1952 to 1953, resulted in the congregational demographic becoming distinctively German. Pachur's Displaced Persons members left the *Bethlehem Kirche* to form national congregations along Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Lutheran lines.<sup>106</sup> It becomes clear then that the nature of Australian Lutheranism was changing, firstly, as we saw earlier, through the increasing cooperation of both synods to

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<sup>100</sup> Weiss, *Statistical history*, 316.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, 317-18.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*, 323.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid*, 319.

<sup>104</sup> See Appendix 1 for further discussion of this demographic profile.

<sup>105</sup> These German migrants had predominantly been wives of the Displaced Person members of the congregation. *Bethlehem Church Centenary, 1872-1972* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1972), 54. See also Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, 93.

<sup>106</sup> *Bethlehem Church Centenary*, 54.

better meet the needs of migrants, and secondly through the establishment of ethnic congregations across Australia.

Pastor Pachur had been ordained into the ministry of ELCA on Sunday 8th August 1951.<sup>107</sup> He had come to the attention of the President of ELCA at a Victorian District Convention earlier that year as a newly-arrived migrant who wished to enter the services of the Church.<sup>108</sup> Pachur was very active and enthusiastic amongst his Adelaide migrant congregation, initiating a free monthly paper, *Der Bethlehems Bote*, by October 1952. Initially a double sided foolscap sheet in the German language, by June 1953 this paper had tripled in size.<sup>109</sup> It provided congregation members with information about excursions, church services, the migrant choir, new arrivals, marriages, confirmations, English language lessons, the history of the Church, donations, job advertisements, and consumer and business advertisements.<sup>110</sup> The paper continued in the German language until February 1964 when small sections of English text began to appear, presumably as second generation migrants became more comfortable with English than with German.<sup>111</sup> This publication, then, which ran in parallel with ELCA's larger nationally distributed *Migrant Messenger*, provided local support and information for Pachur's migrant congregation.

We have witnessed some interesting parallels between the ELCA and UELCA migrant congregations, which is not surprising given their commitment to cooperate and coordinate their services. However, this commitment did not ensure consensus on migrant issues amongst church members. UELCA's Pastor Zinnbauer, like Pachur, had been a migrant himself. Zinnbauer arrived in Australia as a refugee from Nazism in 1940, and subsequently found himself interned in the Tatura and Loveday camps as an enemy alien from 1941 to 1944.<sup>112</sup> In the postwar years he settled in Adelaide and, with his wife, worked tirelessly among the Displaced Person and migrant populations. So strongly did they believe in the work they were doing that the Zinnbauers funded much of their practical work with migrants from their own

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<sup>107</sup> LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 22 August 1951, 262.

<sup>108</sup> Pastor Pachur clearly desired to enter the services of the church prior to his arrival in Australia. He brought out with him an agenda dated 1824 which 'gave rise to the first emigration of Lutherans to Australia'. He presented this to the President of ELCA for the church archives. LAA: *Australian Lutheran*, 2 May 1951, 135.

<sup>109</sup> Not in 1955 as stated by Carmichael in 'Past and Present German Migration,' 156.

<sup>110</sup> LAA: *Der Bethlehem's Bote* Box, October 1952 - November 1966 (incomplete set): *Der Bethlehem's Bote*.

<sup>111</sup> See Clyne, 'Preservation and Renewal,' 40-41.

<sup>112</sup> Rilett, *You Took Me In*, 33, 69.

personal salaries.<sup>113</sup> Pastor Zinnbauer often met new arrivals at the train station or the docks in Port Adelaide.<sup>114</sup> When unable to do this, he endeavoured to provide follow up contact with them instead. As city missionary, Zinnbauer tended to migrants at Woodside Holding Centre, and various workers' camps and hostels. Zinnbauer's work was extremely important to UELCA in terms of the number of migrants he identified and brought into membership of the Church. In 1950 President Stolz, who was also Chairman of the City and Migrant Mission Committee, reported that:

According to the estimates of Pastor Zinnbauer, there are now about 1,500 Lutheran migrants within the metropolitan area.... and particularly owing to the contacting of migrants on arrival by Pastor Zinnbauer, the majority of these are our responsibility.<sup>115</sup>

A native German speaker, Zinnbauer was able to communicate with and assist a large number of migrants. Zinnbauer was wary of the anti-German sentiment he had encountered in Australia during the war years and in June 1951, he responded to rumours of a proposed German congregation in Adelaide, presumably of Special Project workers. Zinnbauer released a memorandum addressed 'Dear Brethren', expressing his concern over such rumours. Zinnbauer made his position clear, 'our policy is quick assimilation', and it would not be in the interests of the Church to encourage congregations along national lines.<sup>116</sup> This belief was at odds with the policy of his church, whose immigration board stated that 'a multinational or even one-national congregation is in accordance with the policy of the Immigration Board, approved of by the General Synod'. Reputing Zinnbauer's claims, the board agreed that 'such a congregation would not retard the natural progress towards assimilation'.<sup>117</sup> Zinnbauer's concern that German congregations 'might be a hotbed of Neo-Nazism' must be considered in the context of his wartime experiences.<sup>118</sup> However, Pastor Zinnbauer was not against the establishment of German congregations in particular, but, rather, of any national congregations. Citing the Latvian and Estonian congregations as examples, he warned that the church 'must guard against the danger of becoming tools for national interests'.<sup>119</sup> According to his biographer, Zinnbauer's vision was:

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<sup>113</sup> Rilett, 'Zinnbauer, Alfred Freund,' in *ADB*, 610-611.

<sup>114</sup> See Appendix 1.8 for further discussion of German migrant arrivals by ship and train to South Australia.

<sup>115</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Reports, South Australia, 1950, 7.

<sup>116</sup> LAA: Immigration Folder [miscellaneous correspondence] 1950-53. Zinnbauer, Memorandum re: German Congregation, 18 June 1951.

<sup>117</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, folder [312-950]. Special Metropolitan Migration and Mission Committee Meeting, 28 November 1951, 2.

<sup>118</sup> Zinnbauer was part Jewish and fled Austria for Australia in late 1939. Rilett, *You Took Me In*, 20.

<sup>119</sup> LAA: Immigration Folder [miscellaneous correspondence] 1950-53. Zinnbauer, Memorandum re: German Congregation, 18 June 1951.

a kaleidoscope of national cultures within an all-embracing Australian Lutheran Church. Assimilation under the umbrella of an Australian English-speaking Lutheran church could, he believed, co-exist with cosmopolitan richness of cultural values.<sup>120</sup>

As we have seen, in their efforts to assist Lutheran migrants with their daily lives and spiritual wellbeing, both Lutheran Churches in Australia tended towards pragmatic assistance and pastoral care. We first saw this pattern developing in Chapters One and Two where the ACCs and departmental social workers stressed their desire to maintain social cohesion and attain migrant assimilation through the provision of community delivered services to migrants. We will see further evidence of this process of implementation in Chapter Five through an examination of the grass roots assistance provided by the coordinating community body, the Good Neighbour Movement, in the field of migrant assimilation. At an agency level, neither UECLA nor ELCA felt compelled to promote assimilationist rhetoric among their Lutheran congregations. They more simply focused their attention on the implementation of settlement policy through the provision of pastoral and spiritual care amongst their newly emerging migrant Lutheran communities.

Trinity, UELCA's South Australian metropolitan German speaking migrant congregation, was formally established between 1952 and 1953 by UELCA President General Stolz, who recognised that 'the task of building up this congregation is more important now than a year ago on account of the increasing flow of German immigrants'. He concluded that for these purposes 'a full-time permanent pastor is required'.<sup>121</sup> To this end Pastor BE Hierse was called to duty from Germany in 1953. Hierse's new German-speaking congregation continued to grow slowly with the arrival of West German assisted passage migrants, and by 1955 membership stood at 320, a net gain of only 33 members in two years.<sup>122</sup> Hierse published a monthly church paper in the German language for his congregation, originally started by Pastor Stolz in 1952, entitled *Grüss Gott*. This paper was continued by Hierse, yet a limited audience and financial problems rendered it ineffectual. Subsidised by UELCA's Migrant Mission Board, the congregation struggled financially until the end of the decade. In 1958 Trinity recorded a staggering loss of 60 members, incurred primarily by non-German members

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<sup>120</sup> Rillet, *You Took Me In*, 104.

<sup>121</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1953, 69. The Synod report for 1952 shows the organisation of Trinity as a congregation but it is not approved until the 1953 year.

<sup>122</sup> It was reported that a substantial 213 members, or two thirds of the 320, were communicants. LAA: UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1955, 74.



leaving the increasingly insular congregation.<sup>123</sup> Pastor Hierse and his family felt this loss keenly, with a dramatic drop in revenue. Ultimately, in 1960, owing to the bad financial standing of the Trinity Parish and, subsequently of his own position, Pastor Hierse resigned, returning to Germany the following year. His resignation left no alternative other than for the Trinity Parish to succumb to mounting pressure to amalgamate with an ‘Australian’ congregation, which they did, joining the North Adelaide Parish in 1961.<sup>124</sup> After an initial burst of membership, the German-speaking Trinity congregation’s bad financial standing and loss of non-German members resulted in its amalgamation with an existing UELCA parish. In this instance an influx of assisted passage German migrants to South Australia after 1952 was not enough to sustain a metropolitan based German-speaking congregation and its pastor.<sup>125</sup> UELCA’s Board of Immigration was acutely aware of its dwindling migrant congregations. In a 1953 report to the District Synods the Board acknowledged attendance at migrant congregations was well below that of Australian congregations and that migrants should be given every encouragement to attend services.<sup>126</sup> It becomes evident that the church adapted its congregational makeup according to local need. When the Trinity congregation needed a dedicated German speaking pastor the church called for one. As demand for this service subsided, the church responded again, within the bounds of its capabilities, to ensure the needs of its congregational members were being met.

## Conclusion

If we accept that migrant participation in religious associations aids transition into a new society, both Australian Lutheran churches made this possible for many postwar migrants including the disadvantaged Special Project German migrants. The churches’ early struggles with the Australian Government soon gave way to support and cooperation through mutual assistance, placement of pastors in migrant camps and on ships, support for foreign language publications and sermons, the sponsoring of pastors and individual migrants from Germany, and the provision of pastoral and spiritual support, all to better meet the settlement and pastoral needs of migrants.

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<sup>123</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1957, 62; UELCA Synod Report, SA, 1958, 66.

<sup>124</sup> Rillet, *You Took Me In*, 172.

<sup>125</sup> This stands in stark contrast to Pastor Pachur’s financially viable ELCA Bethlehems Kirche congregation, which was also situated in metropolitan Adelaide.

<sup>126</sup> LAA: Minutes of the Immigration Board of UELCA, 1949-66 [manila folder]. Report of the Immigration Board of UELCA, 1953, 2.

German language played a dual role for Australian Lutheranism in the postwar years. On the one hand language was a means of communication, a common link that facilitated understanding and adjustment for both the Church and the migrant. On the other hand, language retention held much more widespread significance for the Lutheran Church in Australia. Language was an important factor in the continuation (or revival, if you will) and strengthening of the Lutheran community within a multicultural Australian setting. The German language, as the language of Luther and of the Reformation, was an important aspect of Australian Lutheranism and postwar immigration provided fresh impetus for its retention. National, state and parish based newsletters and publications, German language sermons, communications with the international Lutheran community, the sponsoring of pastors from Germany, provision of interpreting and translation services for the Australian Government and other community bodies, German language welcome pamphlets and services to migrants met off the boats, trains and in the migrant camps, along with general migrant counselling and provision of pastoral support are all evidence of the integral role of the German language to the daily existence of the Lutheran Church in postwar Australian society at both the macro and micro levels.

The Australian immigration program had significant ramifications for the postwar development and reinvention of the Lutheran Church in Australia. Not only did it enable the fostering of the church's historical Lutheran foundations, but it saw the flourishing of non-German migrant and ethnic parishes. This signalled the beginning of a major shift in the nature of Lutheranism in Australia, with postwar immigration providing the impetus for change. The annual Synod reports of UELCA, the activities of both Church Immigration Boards, and the experiences of migrant pastors in South Australia specifically, show the clear establishment and growth of national congregations among the Latvian and Estonian Displaced Persons communities. These congregations were ministered to in their own languages by their own pastors, creating for the first time in Australia non-German ethnic groupings within the Lutheran Church. While on the one hand German migrants and refugees were specifically targeted as part of both churches' spiritual and pastoral duty towards fellow Lutherans, on the other hand the nature and composition of Australian Lutheranism was significantly altered by the Government's larger immigration program.

The scale of Australia's postwar immigration program challenged the specifically German nature of Australian Lutheranism during the 1950s. Germany remained the land of the Reformation, the home of Luther, but the Lutheran Church, much like the Australian landscape, was transformed into a multicultural paradigm. The implementation of the West German Assisted Passage Scheme gave Australian Lutheranism a sense of historical continuity, a reinvigoration of the Church and a chance to reinforce its cultural and linguistic foundations. German language publications and sermons flourished again in the postwar years, pastors were once more brought out from Germany to minister in the German language, links with European and international Lutheran bodies were once again established, and the two Lutheran synods worked together in the field of migrant assimilation. So flexible were the activities, negotiations and ties of both Lutheran synods during this time that church structures changed as a result. This chapter, then, demonstrates at an agency level what was happening at the national level and returns us to the basic premise of this thesis: that migrant assimilation must be understood in terms of both the top down and bottom up approaches, where needs determined responses just as much as policy. Within the microcosm of the Lutheran Church in Australia we have an important example of the grand social experiment that was Australian postwar immigration. Ultimately, the result for Lutheranism in 1966, after over 100 years of division in Australia, was the formation of one amalgamated Lutheran Church of Australia.

## 4

**UELCA, Pastor Bittner and the emigration of ethnic German refugees: a negative case study**

Concluding Part Two of the thesis, this chapter delves deeper into the microcosm of the Lutheran Church in Australia to further reveal the process of postwar assimilation at the agency and community levels. In Chapter Three we saw how both Lutheran churches responded to the arrival of postwar migrants and how they worked within the government's policy of assimilation to provide pastoral and religious support as well as basic settlement assistance to migrants. Now, in Chapter Four we focus more narrowly on the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia's (UELCA) undertaking to sponsor the immigration and settlement of 200 ethnic German refugees in Australia between 1948 and 1953. Using avenues and tactics that we are by now familiar with, UELCA initially identified this group of refugees who were stranded in southern Germany with few prospects for a quality existence or valid avenues of emigration. Championed by UELCA President General, Stolz, this group, with their pastor, immigrated to Australia through sponsorship from individual Lutheran families resident largely in rural South Australia. As we will see, though, a series of misunderstandings between UELCA and the congregation's pastor, Alfred Bittner, and the frustration of the group's expectation that they would remain an ethnically homogeneous unit in Australia, resulted in the process of emigration and settlement being fraught with difficulty.

The plight of Pastor Bittner and his congregation was brought to the attention of UELCA in 1948. Two years later Bittner, his wife, two children and twenty-seven of his congregation landed in Australia. Having been advanced travel loans through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and sponsored by individual UELCA members, the Bittner migrants (as I will refer to this group) were settled in rural South Australia, dispersed in their accommodations and employment, and encumbered with heavy financial burdens. UELCA was not able to support these migrants adequately on their arrival in Australia, other than to provide a place of worship and temporary housing and employment opportunities. Dispersed throughout the state, this ethnic German congregation soon found its way back to the metropolitan Adelaide area, and ultimately to its pastor. In the following twelve months Pastor

Bittner experienced a dramatic fall from grace as a series of misunderstandings, broken promises, and breakdowns in communication led to open hostility.

The Bittner story is important for two reasons. At a micro level it reinforces our understanding of assimilation as it operated within the community. But more importantly at a macro level this chapter substantiates the thesis by presenting a case in the negative. On the surface of things, UELCA's experiment in sponsoring the emigration of an ethnically homogeneous group of 200 Lutheran refugees and settling them into the existing Australian Lutheran community should have worked. As we saw in Chapter Three, the church had extensive community networks to help receive and assist postwar migrants. Similarly, it had strong German Lutheran traditions and ties with the international Lutheran community. Why then did the Bittner story end, as it does, in disillusionment and a souring of relations? Ultimately, this micro study demonstrates that where key elements of the assimilation process are absent - namely the overarching involvement of government instrumentalities - or frustrated, as were the personal ambitions and enmities of Bittner and the church, the processes of communication and negotiation can break down. In the case of Bittner and his migrant congregation, this ensured that their settlement experience was fraught with difficulties.

### **The sources**

The Bittner case study is based almost entirely on a small set of archival records housed at the Lutheran Archives of Australia. They were brought to my attention by the archivist, Lyall Kupke, who knew of the Bittner story and the existence of the records. Correspondence files of UELCA President General, Stolz, including correspondence with member churches in Germany and individual Bittner group members, shed light on the enormity of the role undertaken by Stolz, and his personal investment in the success of the Bittner group migration. Files of the UELCA Board of Immigration, including correspondence between members, meeting minutes and circulars, all demonstrate the inner workings of the church's main body established to deal with postwar immigration, and in this case specifically with Bittner and his congregation. Finally, various church periodicals such as the *Lutheran Herald*, the annual Synod Reports, and reports of the South Australian Metropolitan Migration and City Mission Committee are at once informative on the Bittner situation, and demonstrative of how the church used its established community networks to help meet the needs of Pastor Bittner and

his congregation. An individual case file on Pastor Bittner is peppered with correspondence documenting the disintegration of Bittner's relationship with the church after his arrival in Australia. Collectively this archival material tells one side of the Bittner story and is an example of agency-sponsored migration within the government's wider mass-immigration scheme.

### ***Volksdeutsche* in Europe: 'Good Lutheran stock'**

What we know of the Bittner story begins in Lodz, Poland, where in 1945, after the signing of the Potsdam Agreement, *Volksdeutsche*, or ethnic Germans, who had lived their entire lives within the city's borders, were forcibly expelled from Poland and resettled in Germany. As we saw in Chapter Three, these people were not considered refugees by the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) and instead came to the attention of international organisations such as the LWF. It is part of the common international immigration narrative that the postwar period saw mass population movements hitherto unseen on an international scale. What is not commonly recognised, in the Australian historiography at least, is that the forced expulsion of ethnic Germans across Eastern Europe formed a large contingent of these population movements.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Displaced Persons (DP), ethnic German refugees found it much harder to emigrate from Europe. This chapter brings to light one such instance of their immigration to Australia, largely through the efforts of the LWF and UELCA.

To place the German refugee situation in perspective it is useful to compare it with Australia's total postwar migrant intakes. In Australia, between 1947 and 1985, a period of almost 40 years, approximately 4.3 million migrants and refugees arrived and settled here.<sup>2</sup> In Europe, during a 3 year period between 1945 and 1948, over 7 million German refugee and expellee arrivals were registered in the three Western zones of Germany.<sup>3</sup> Sociologist Richard Robbins

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<sup>1</sup> See Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Charles A Price, 'Refugees and Mass Migration: Australia,' *International Migration Review* 20, no. 1 (Spring, 1986), 81.

<sup>3</sup> The Potsdam Agreement, 1945, had called for the forced expulsion of German populations from within the new borders of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Between the signing of the Potsdam Agreement and the arrival of the Bittner ethnic Germans to Australia in November 1948, over 7 million German refugee and expellee arrivals had been registered in the three Western Zones of Germany. An unanticipated by-product of the Agreement was the expulsion of German nationals and ethnic Germans from Yugoslavia, Roumania, Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries. Initial estimates in November 1945 of an expected 6.5 million German refugees were grossly inadequate. Chauncy Harris, Gabriele Wulker, 'The Refugee Problem of Germany,' *Economic Geography* 29, no. 1 (January, 1953), 13; Julius Isaac, 'Problems of Cultural Assimilation Arising

was in Europe between 1949 and 1950, on a Fulbright Scholarship, studying aspects of the European refugee situation. He observed at the time that while ethnic Germans did not come under the mandate of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), legally they ‘had an authentic refugee status; they endured extreme social disorganization; they needed international assistance’.<sup>4</sup> Julius Isaac, similarly writing about postwar refugees from Europe in 1950, highlighted the difficulties inherent in this population transfer and the refugees’ adjustment to their new lives. He wrote: ‘serious difficulties and delays are bound to result from the almost unprecedented volume of the immigration, from economic conditions in defeated Germany and from the fact that the immigrants came, and the old citizens received them, under pressure of necessity’.<sup>5</sup> This then placed refugees such as the Bittner migrants in a precarious position, with no immediate opportunities to emigrate after their displacement in 1945.

For the LWF the emigration of Lutheran ethnic Germans became a moral imperative. For UELCA in Australia it became more than this. Not only did the church see it as their godly duty to help fellow Lutherans, but also the origins of Bittner’s congregation presented them with an opportunity to strengthen their own historical foundations in Australia. Bittner’s congregational ancestors were of the same Lutheran refugee stock as Kavel and the first German Lutheran settlers to Australia (and specifically South Australia). As we have already seen in Chapter Three, German Lutheran origins were integral to the identity of Lutheranism in Australia, and as such these German refugees were early identified as a potential source of new congregational members. The opportunity to sponsor and bring to Australia the Bittner group, then, provided added impetus for the church’s involvement in the postwar assimilation program.

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from Population Transfers in Western Germany,’ *Population Studies* 3, Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants: Supplement (March, 1950), 24; Kunz cites some 20 million Germans and 8-10 million non-Germans displaced by war in this period, Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> This international assistance was not forthcoming, quite simply due to the perceptions of ethnic German collusion with the Nazis during the Second World War and the West German Government’s responsibility for them in postwar Europe. Robbins observed and reported that the international response to ethnic German refugees was because of the view that they had been ‘associated with both the Nazi program of internal subversion of governments, and with the deportation and massacre of non-German peoples’. Richard Robbins, ‘The Refugee Status: Challenge and Response,’ *Law and Contemporary Problems* 21 (Spring, 1956), 318.

<sup>5</sup> Isaac, ‘Problems of Cultural Assimilation,’ 26. See also GC Paikert, *The German Exodus: A selective study on the post-World War II expulsion of German populations and its effects* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1962), 5.

As we saw in Chapter Three, both Lutheran Churches in Australia were early entrants into the field of postwar migration with both Presidents contacting the Department of Immigration over the possibility of establishing Lutheran migration schemes before 1950. UELCA's German Lutheran foundations and ties with European Lutheran churches in particular helped facilitate this work amongst postwar Lutheran refugees and the ethnic German refugee situation gave the church an identifiable group to focus its efforts on.<sup>6</sup> Ludwig Greve, an old school friend of President Stolz, met Bittner in Europe and placed him in contact with UELCA in 1948. After this initial contact Stolz wrote to Minister Calwell seeking advice on the emigration of Bittner and his congregation. Stolz wrote of the group, 'I think we have here a wonderful opportunity of gaining immigrants of the right type; with the exception of some elderly people their congregation consists mostly of young strong people, anxious and willing to work'. Stolz framed their emigration within the wider goals of Australia's mass-immigration program: 'If we could get this group out they would most likely draw thousands if not one hundred thousand after them, all former Polish citizens of German descent.'<sup>7</sup> Stolz further appealed to the government's desire for migrants: 'Knowing your interest in the increasing of our Australian population and your anxiety of getting people of the right type, I feel sure that you will give this matter very serious and favourable consideration.'<sup>8</sup> Secretary Heyes noted Stolz's request and proceeded to consult Roger Armstrong, of the Department's Assimilation Division. We are reminded here of some of the main characters involved in engineering Australia's postwar immigration and assimilation programs. Armstrong noted that the LWF who, as we saw in Chapter Three, sponsored German emigrants to Australia, already worked closely with the IRO and could be of assistance to these refugees.<sup>9</sup> Calwell's earlier comments in Chapter Three about the need to avoid fostering a 'Germanic outlook' within UELCA appears absent from the correspondence here.

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<sup>6</sup> As we saw in Chapter Three, Australian Lutheran congregations responded initially to the ethnic German refugee problem by sending aid to rural areas of Germany. These rural areas became increasingly densely populated and under resourced as the majority of Europe's ethnic German refugees, including Pastor Bittner and his 200 strong Lutheran congregation, were settled. See Harris & Wulker, 'The Refugee Problem,' 16, 23. According to the 1946 census, 85 per cent of expellees in the American and British zones were in rural areas, compared with 61 per cent of the native population. With the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in September 1949, a Ministry for Expellees (*Ministerium fuer Vertriebene*) was formed to deal with refugees like Pastor Bittner. See also Isaac, 'Problems of Cultural Assimilation,' 28.

<sup>7</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218. Letter to Calwell from Reverend Stolz, President of UELCA, 11 August 1948, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, 2. See handwritten note in margin by Armstrong.



In May 1949, nine months after his initial appeal on behalf of the Bittner migrants, Stolz travelled to Canberra for a meeting. By this stage he had received an official response from the department stating that after initial enquiries in Europe, the department had discerned that the Bittner group was not eligible for displaced persons status and therefore not eligible to migrate to Australia under the IRO-sponsored DP scheme. The Department of Immigration did concede to Stolz that every consideration would be given to individual applications for landing permits from amongst the Bittner group, as per the existing immigration policy.<sup>10</sup> Thus while the Australian Government was in no position to assist with the emigration of these ethnic German refugees, it did not discourage the church and were willing to grant individual landing permits where requirements were met. This is the point at which the Bittner experience diverges from that of Australia's intake of DPs or assisted migrants.

By mid-1949 UELCA and the Australian Government had established that Pastor Bittner and his congregation were not eligible for free or government-assisted passage to Australia, nor for accommodation in government provided migrant reception centres and hostels. All emigration and settlement costs associated with the Bittner group were to be borne by the migrants and their sponsors, in this case the LWF and the church under the Lutheran World Federation Sponsorship Scheme (LWFSS). This placed a heavy burden on all involved and, as we will see, made the journey from emigration to re-settlement more perilous for Bittner and his congregation. While the government's approach was arguably dispassionate, it was pragmatic and responsive as we have seen it to be time and again throughout this thesis.

### **The emigration of Bittner and his congregation: managing the process**

In principle there was no government opposition to the migration of ethnic Germans to Australia so soon after the war. Indeed, as we saw in Chapters Two and Three, the government itself was involved in many smaller German emigration schemes prior to the introduction of the 1952 bilateral agreement.<sup>11</sup> For President Stolz and UELCA, then, one of the first steps in the emigration process was the acquiring of landing permits for individual Bittner group members. As we will see, the sheer logistics of this enterprise would take its toll on the

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<sup>10</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/5218. Memo, Department of Immigration, Notes for Interview with Rev. J.J. Stolz, 11am on 23 May 1949, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> See also Appendix 1 for further discussion of the schemes under which Germans migrated to Australia between 1945 and 1965, esp. 1.3.

already stretched resources of the church generally, and of Stolz in particular. To acquire landing permits Stolz needed to first secure pledges of accommodation and employment for each individual migrant before they could travel to Australia. While in the broader Australian immigration program migrant reception and settlement were handled by teams of immigration officers stationed both in Australia and Europe, in the case of the Bittner migrants this onerous burden fell to Stolz and the church. Once guarantees were acquired for a large number of the Bittner group, Stolz forwarded landing permit applications to the Chief Migration Officer (CMO) in South Australia, Mr Edson, who we will meet again in Chapter Five. Many months elapsed before Stolz received a reply granting the permits, after which time Stolz still had to secure exit visas in Germany. At this juncture, in May 1950, Stolz felt compelled to remind Edson of the need for haste: 'More permits are anxiously awaited both here and by the people who have been waiting for nearly 2 years.'<sup>12</sup> Edson reminded Stolz that the granting of landing permits by the Australian Government did not in any way

entitle the holder to any special or preferential treatment as regards the grant of a visa for, or passage to, Australia, and in view of the number of persons wishing to proceed to Australia, a considerable period may elapse before those in possession of Landing Permits can embark.<sup>13</sup>

Much to Stolz's chagrin, these bureaucratic delays further complicated the sponsorship process and made his job of managing the mass emigration project all the more difficult. Further evidence of the drawn out nature of the process is the fact that eighteen months elapsed between the Department of Immigration giving Stolz in principle support for the scheme and the arrival of the first Bittner migrants. A timeframe acceptable to the government immigration apparatus, for Stolz an eighteen month cycle hampered his ability to keep abreast of the situation and increased the likelihood that changes might occur to sponsorship pledges and hence landing permit applications.

Stolz sought to counter the lengthy nomination process by keeping the plight of ethnic Germans in the minds of congregational members. As we saw in Chapter three, both Lutheran churches established patterns of communication with their Australian congregational members, as well as advocacy on behalf of migrants, through their monthly and bi-monthly church publications. Between 1949 and 1950 Reverend Stolz made heartfelt pleas, through

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<sup>12</sup> UELCA Box 312-20, folder 312-950, Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950. Letter to GAM Edson from Stolz, 9 May 1950.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Edson, 18 August 1950, 1.

UELCA's *Lutheran Herald*, asking for the help of the Lutheran community in bringing the Bittner group to Australia. He wrote of the ethnic German congregation: 'Being of good Lutheran stock with a solid Lutheran Church tradition and consciousness, we may well acclaim them as "flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone" in the spiritual sense.' Stolz further appealed to the basic humanitarian right of these migrants who had been 'refugees for at least four years in an overcrowded and poor country' to migrate and find a welcome home in Australia. Finally Stolz appealed to the UELCA community's sense of Christian duty:

Today I am in a position to place before you a grand opportunity for fulfilling the injunction in a special measure which is implied in the above words of our lord: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.<sup>14</sup>

It is evident that Stolz used methods of communication similar to those we saw in Chapter Three to encourage widespread congregational support for Bittner's migration.

Between securing Australian sponsors and the arrival of the first group of Bittner migrants, Stolz amassed a large body of correspondence from Lutheran farmers, businesses and families pledging support by way of accommodation and employment for the Bittner group.<sup>15</sup> Almost unanimously though, Australian sponsors grew impatient with the rate of progress, as did Stolz himself. Letters to Stolz from his congregation became impatient, resulting more often than not in the retraction of nominations and necessitating further last minute nominations for families already granted landing permits and visas. This proved a mammoth logistical task for Stolz, and the evidence suggests that he became very personally involved, investing much of himself in the process. As we will see, the sheer volume of correspondence Stolz maintained with individual church members attests to this. In June 1950, five months before the first of the Bittner group had even arrived in the country, Stolz began receiving letters from Australian sponsors stating that they were 'in urgent need of domestic help, and if they do not arrive soon we will have to seek help through other sources, and cancel our nomination'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> LAA: *Lutheran Herald*. Stolz, 'Inasmuch', 19 March 1949, 86.

<sup>15</sup> It appears that a significant amount of the Bittner correspondence is missing from the Lutheran Archives of Australia files. Registered mail stubs issued by the Postmaster General's Department suggest that Stolz wrote letters numbering in the dozens to Bittner during 1950, before his arrival in Australia. Copies of these letters and Bittner's responses are absent from the correspondence file. LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, folder 312-950, Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from AG Heinrich, 5 June 1950.

Others simply wrote:

Since we have waited for such a long time for the arrival of this family, and we are continually questioned by migrants close here ... for employment and accommodation for the family on our farm, we have engaged a couple to commence with us.<sup>17</sup>

Again and again Stolz received similar news: ‘now I have a family in the house. But as soon as they go out I will let you know again’.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, another sponsor wrote, ‘I am looking forward to them coming out as I will have to get another very shortly if they don't soon arrive’.<sup>19</sup> One sponsor warned Stolz that ‘should their arrival here be delayed for some considerable time I am afraid I would have to cancel the nomination for that particular family and try and get a family of our faith who are already here or coming in the near future’.<sup>20</sup> Another sponsor also expressed his inability to wait any longer but that he would ‘rather have a person in the house that would be a Lutheran’ for whom he could secure ‘plenty of work potato digging’.<sup>21</sup> Thus for some Australian Lutherans, at least, sponsorship of the Bittner migrants revealed a desire to help fellow Lutherans rather than an opportunistic attempt to secure cheap labour or lodgers. Still, the implications of this body of correspondence for Stolz and the Bittner group were dire; lengthy permit and emigration processes endangered the church’s efforts to retain local sponsors for the emigrants.

In November 1950, UELCA announced through the *Lutheran Herald* the arrival of the first Bittner migrants.<sup>22</sup> Having settled thirty-one of them in the homes of rural South Australian congregational members at Laura, Appila, Blyth, Lowbank, Blanchetown, and Bow Hill, the church used the occasion to draw parallels with South Australia’s early Lutheran settlers:

One hundred and twelve years ago Silesian and other Lutherans, oppressed in their homeland, had two doors open to them. One led into nearby Russia (Poland), the other

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<sup>17</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, folder 312-950, Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950. Letter to Stolz from Mr Shulz, 3 June 1951.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Mr Bulow, 21 February 1951.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Bennett, 10 May 1951.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Mr Sbresni, 6 October 1951.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Bulow, 18 September 1951.

<sup>22</sup> The families were listed as: Georg Hauser, family of three, sponsored by Shulz family, Renmark, South Australia; Adolph Keppler, family of five, sponsored by the Sbresni’s of Oyster Creek, Queensland; Friedrich Keppler, family of four, sponsored by EH Wurst, Laura, South Australia; Adolph Shulz, family of four sponsored by SW Wieck, Wyreema, Queensland; Erwin Muller, family of four, sponsored by WT Bulow, Toogoolawah, Queensland; Adolph Mischke, family of four, sponsored by AP Spry, Bow Hill, South Australia; Karl Erdmann, family of four, sponsored by SD Klante, Wudinna, South Australia; Eric Kuhn, family of one, sponsored by Laura, South Australia; Edward Pohl, family of one, sponsored by Dr KJ Basedow, Blyth, South Australia; Pastor Bittner, family of four, sponsored by Mrs J Pech, Appila, South Australia. LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, folder 312-950, Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950.

to far-away Australia.... After more than a hundred years a token reunion of the descendants of Silesian Lutherans has taken place.

Stolz impressed again on UELCA members the need to open their homes and hearts to these people who were ‘not nominal Lutherans, but Lutherans by conviction, who will fit in well with our congregation’. He went on to conclude that here was ‘an opportunity par excellence to strengthen a weak Lutheran cause in one or the other district in Australia’ by welcoming these fervent Lutherans into the Church.<sup>23</sup> As we learnt in Chapter Three, both Lutheran synods in Australia faced difficulties attracting postwar migrants to the church because of a simple lack of faith brought about by the war and political circumstances in Germany in the 1930s. The Bittner case study is demonstrative of Australian Lutheranism’s early attempts to counter this ‘lack of faith’ through the migration of ethnic German Lutherans to Australia.

Following the arrival of the first group of Bittner migrants in November 1950, Stolz noted an increase in correspondence from sponsors enquiring as to the status of their nominations. Replies were gracious, apologetic and sympathetic to the sponsors’ situation.<sup>24</sup> Stolz responded to one suggestion that a nomination be retracted:

Your immigrants have so far not arrived, nor are they in the next batch, which is expected about the end of January. It is hard to say in which later batch they will be. It all depends on the time it takes overseas before their Exit Permit is handed out and passage obtained .... I sincerely hope that you will be able to hold your place open for them.<sup>25</sup>

Stolz did not hesitate to explain to sponsors the logistical difficulties associated with bringing families from Europe. Placating those that were growing impatient Stolz wrote, ‘there was quite a hold up overseas, but I think the difficulties are now being overcome and their coming should soon be announced to me’.<sup>26</sup> There is evidence that some sponsors remained committed to the process in spite of the delays. One such nominator wrote to Stolz, ‘I would still guarantee accommodation for them, however I may not need to employ them for any lengthy period as I may have other help by then’.<sup>27</sup> Another wrote:

<sup>23</sup> LAA: *Lutheran Herald*. Stolz, ‘Church in Action’, 25 November 1950, 376.

<sup>24</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, folder 312-950, Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950. Letter to Mr Schulz, Balmoral, Victoria, from Stolz, 26 June 1951. See also: Stolz to Bennett, 22 December 1950; Stolz to Bulow, 1 March 1951; Stolz to Wundke, 1 September 1951; and Stolz to Wundke, 7 September 1951.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Bennett, 10 May 1951; and letter to Bennett from Stolz, 22 December 1951.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, letter to Wundke from Stolz, 1 August 1951.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Gerhard Jericho, 1 January 1952.

I had more or less given them up long ago, but it will be quite alright with me, to let the nomination stand so that they may get their Landing Permits. As the situation stands now, I am quite able to manage at least for some considerable time.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, following the arrival of the first batch of Bittner migrants, Stolz increasingly became responsible for corresponding with those still waiting in western Germany. Stolz indicated that:

since Pastor Bittner left Germany there is no leader for the group to urge and help them on. I have relied on him [Bittner] to speed them up from here but with full-time factory work, he evidently finds it hard to keep up the contacts. I am now compelled to take the matter into my own hands and correspond with the individual families.<sup>29</sup>

As the correspondence demonstrates, Stolz's management of the sponsorship, migration, and settlement process was an ongoing effort. On the one hand he coordinated individual Australian nominators and their applications for landing permits, while on the other hand he maintained correspondence with the Bittner migrants and kept abreast of the visa and shipping arrangements in Germany. In this way Stolz performed a range of logistical tasks equivalent to the roles of multiple Australian immigration officers.<sup>30</sup> To coordinate and sustain the sponsorship, migration and settlement of Bittner and his congregation, over a number of years, was no small feat for one elderly man. In 1952, at 75 years of age, Stolz had many other responsibilities besides the Bittner case: he was President General of UELCA, chairman of the general immigration board, and of the City and Migrant Mission Committee.<sup>31</sup> Stolz's management of the Bittner group process was at once admirable and fraught. As Bittner group members continued to arrive and settle into the Australian Lutheran community Stolz's personal involvement coupled with the Church's resolve and resources were both sorely tested.

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<sup>28</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, folder 312-950, Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950. Letter to Stolz from Kummerow, 8 January 1952.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, letter to Schulz from Stolz, 26 January 1951.

<sup>30</sup> To put Stolz's efforts in perspective, earlier DP arrivals and subsequent assisted migrants all had access to a functioning network of Australian immigration officers throughout Europe and a highly managed immigration and settlement process in both Europe and Australia.

<sup>31</sup> The following year Stolz experienced personal grief through the loss of his wife Amalia Margaretha Stolz in August 1953. *Advertiser* (Adelaide), Thursday 20 August 1953, 20.

### **Communications breakdown: the process fails**

By the end of 1951 a further ten arrivals had brought the total number of Bittner migrants in South Australia to forty-one. Stolz recorded that another twenty-nine had secured landing permits and would sail for Australia shortly. He referred to the Bittner migrants in his annual President General's report as a 'fine stamp of people, churchly, industrious, although isolation in Australia is hard to bear for them'. Stolz described Bittner as an 'energetic pastor [who] whilst in Western Germany gathered into preaching places about 2,000 souls of former Free Church Lutherans from the Eastern Zone'. Stolz also reported with heavy heart that in Australia, out of financial necessity Bittner 'earns his living by factory employment'. The UELCA Synod felt this 'deeply, particularly as he is from the Free Church, with which we were and are in full church fellowship'.<sup>32</sup> The conditions leading to Bittner's lack of employment by the church reveal the beginnings of Bittner's fall from grace and the pitfalls of non-government assisted migration in the postwar years. It also demonstrates that personal involvement alone, with all the goodwill in the world, was not sufficient to ensure successful immigration.

By the end of 1951 Bittner's migrants had begun to 'drift to Adelaide, and with them their pastor'. Looking for work and more adequate lodgings, they began to surface at the migrant services at Trinity Congregation, which in Chapter Three we saw was without a dedicated German speaking pastor for some time until the calling of Pastor Hierse in 1953.<sup>33</sup> Stolz reported in 1952 that those Bittner migrants who had drifted to Adelaide were a 'churchly people who want services' and therefore, argued Stolz, 'it was only natural that Pastor Bittner took over the services every fortnight'. For this Bittner drew no salary from the Church, and remained in his full-time factory employment.<sup>34</sup> While migrant population shifts from rural to metropolitan areas were not uncommon in the postwar period, in this case it was the influence Bittner exerted over his 'flock' and his desire for them to remain together that proved problematic for the church.

Doubts were voiced over the quality of Pastor Bittner's preaching by UELCA officers, casting doubt on his suitability to minister to congregations in Australia. Some months after attending

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<sup>32</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Reports, SA, 1951. Stolz, 'Board of Immigration Report 1951', 92.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter Three for a general history of the UELCA Trinity congregation.

<sup>34</sup> LAA: UELCA Synod Reports, SA, 1952. Stolz, 'Review of the Fields', 70.

a handful of Bittner's services at Trinity, Stolz reflected in a letter to a colleague, Dr Guenther of the Free Church in Germany, that these services were lacking. Stolz summarised his and the Church's position: 'The sermons were not satisfactory. Brother Muetzelfeldt judged them to be homiletically insufficient and theologically doubtful.'<sup>35</sup> Still Stolz remained hopeful: 'I want to do everything I can to repair the damage, as long as Brother Bittner can be helped' but acknowledging that he could not shake his or others' perceptions that Bittner's 'character was somewhat shady'.<sup>36</sup> Seeking answers, Stolz requested a confidential report on Bittner from his friend Ludwig Greve based on Greve's experiences with Bittner in Germany. Greve responded that in Germany there had been problems with Bittner's preaching methods and that perhaps 'we should straightaway quite openly discuss with our brethren anything that may appear in need of correction in their preaching or teaching. Perhaps I neglected to do that here'.<sup>37</sup> A series of miscommunications and misunderstandings, then, brought Bittner, Stolz and UELCA to this point.

By April 1952 Bittner had ceased his fortnightly sermons at the Trinity Congregation. The strain of full-time factory employment and the disappointment of not gaining a full-time position with the Church weighed heavily on him. Stolz reported on Bittner's position:

Those who are acquainted with him [Bittner] have the impression that the disappointments which he suffered - not being engaged as a pastor but having, together with his wife, to work in factories, his inability to get more of his group out, his financial embarrassment, the deterioration of his wife's health, the effects of manual work upon himself, have had such an upsetting effect upon him that he needs time to find the necessary balance of mind.<sup>38</sup>

Noting the growing need for a full-time pastor at Trinity, Stolz reported to the South Australian Metropolitan Migration and Mission Committee that 'the work of building up the congregation and caring for it goes far beyond a part-time pastor.... The providing of a full-

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<sup>35</sup> LAA: Bittner, AR Pastor [0.5cm file]. Undated four-page letter in German language to Dr Guenther, Oberkirchenrat, Elberfeldt, Germany, from Stolz c.1952, 3. German language text of quote: 'Die Predigten befriedigten nicht. Moniletisch ungenuegend, theologisch bedenklich, urteilte Br. Muetzelfeldt.'

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 3. German language text of quote: 'ich will alles tun, um den Shacen gut zu machen, solange Bruder Bittner sich helfen laesst...'; and 'kann ich und andere den Eindruck nicht loswerden, dass er ein etwas undurchsichtiger Charakter ist'.

<sup>37</sup> LAA: Bittner, AR Pastor [0.5cm file]. Letter to Stolz from Ludwig Greve, Bochum, Germany, 25 September 1953, 2-3.

<sup>38</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, Board of Immigration Files. Folder: Estonian and Latvian 1950-51. Metropolitan Pastors Reports to the South Australian Metropolitan Migration and Mission Committee, 16 April 1952, 3, Stolz, 'Trinity Evangelical Lutheran'.



time pastor is an urgent necessity. May God give us the right man'.<sup>39</sup> Bittner's state of mind and the Church's concerns over the quality of his sermons ultimately saw him passed over for the position. The incident proved to be one of many disappointments and miscommunications experienced between Bittner and UELCA.

Open hostility intensified between Pastor Bittner and UELCA's Board of Immigration during 1951-52. The crux of the problem was an article Bittner had written for *Der Heimatbote*, a Polish *Volksdeutsche* periodical, about his congregation's experiences in Australia. The article looked unfavourably on the church, leveling claims of discrepancy and misrepresentation against it. The UELCA Board of Immigration was troubled by the claims and accused Bittner of lying, misquoting its representatives and unduly complaining about the harsh conditions in Australia for Lutheran refugees such as himself.<sup>40</sup> Executive Officer Muetzfeldt acknowledged that, 'what Pastor Bittner writes about the conditions in Australia is, of course, no concern of the Board. He is fully entitled to his opinion, as wrong as it may be'.<sup>41</sup> However, the Board did take issue with Bittner's misrepresentations of the church in particular. It becomes evident that Bittner was in a precarious position when compared with the experience of postwar migrants more generally. His affiliation with the Lutheran Church and his indebtedness to UELCA, and the LWF in particular, hampered his ability to speak freely. It also limited his recourse to government agency in Australia, which as we have seen time and again throughout this thesis, was integral to meeting the needs of migrants more generally and hence ensuring their smooth transition into Australian society.

Adding fuel to the already smouldering fires of UELCA's Board of Immigration, by August 1951 not one of the Bittner migrants had attempted to pay back their travel loans, originally advanced through the LWF. Muetzfeldt indicated that it was the Board's impression that Bittner had been actively encouraging his members to disregard the loan repayments. Subsequently, Muetzfeldt reported, a number of them including Bittner had begun buying

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<sup>39</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-20, Board of Immigration Files. Folder: Estonian and Latvian 1950-51. Metropolitan Pastors Reports to the South Australian Metropolitan Migration and Mission Committee, 16 April 1952, 3, Stolz, 'Trinity Evangelical Lutheran,' 4.

<sup>40</sup> LAA: Box 312-950, Board of Immigration Files, Immigration Board and Bittner Case File. Letter to Pastor Bittner from Executive Officer Muetzfeldt, 9 October 1951; Muetzfeldt to Lohe, 9 October 1951; Stolz to Muetzfeldt, 25 October 1951; and Stolz to Muetzfeldt, 29 October 1951.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, letter to President General of UELCA and members of the UELCA Immigration Board from Executive Officer Muetzfeldt, 9 October 1951, 3.

land and housing in the Adelaide area instead of servicing their debts.<sup>42</sup> Muetzelfeldt wrote to members of the Board on this issue, stating that:

this attitude on the part of this one group will seriously affect our desire to be of help to other *Volksdeutsche* wishing to come to Australia. I can not possibly approve additional loans until I am absolutely certain that we have the full cooperation of Pastor Bittner himself.

These early issues and misunderstandings between Bittner and the church led Muetzelfeldt to conclude that Bittner's attitude displayed 'a lack of honest goodwill'.<sup>43</sup> Muetzelfeldt's growing animosity and general distrust of Pastor Bittner throughout 1951 ultimately sealed the fate of the remaining Bittner congregational members still resident in western Germany.<sup>44</sup>

In 1951 Stolz received correspondence from one of the Bittner group families still residing in western Germany. Egon Glasenapp wrote to Stolz, 'in February 1950 reverend Alfred Bittner ... booked for us emigration to Australia. We are people of the same country as Reverend Bittner and want to emigrate to Australia to found a new home and a new existence'. Glasenapp went on to say that with Stolz's kindly help Bittner and the first batch had come to Australia and that 'before his departure he [Bittner] promised to do his utmost to get the Landing Permits for us. Till now he did not succeed. Since 1 [and] 1/2 years passed without prospect to come to Australia'. The letter continues:

Before I dare to ask you, most respectable Mr Church Bishop, to help us to find a new home and an existence. Please, will you be so kind to arrange my proposal, that we have not to wait too long .... My wife and I want to work to repay the passage as quick as ever possible.<sup>45</sup>

This letter arrived on Stolz's desk in September 1951 at the height of the UELCA Board of Immigration's troubles with Pastor Bittner and his group. This accounts for Stolz's reply to Glasenapp advising that 'there is a hold-up in reference to nominations of families belonging to the Bittner group'. Stolz makes reference to the non-payment of travel loans by the recently

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<sup>42</sup> LAA: Bittner, AR Pastor [0.5cm file]. Undated four-page letter in German language to Dr Guenther, Oberkirchenrat, Elberfeldt, Germany, from Stolz, c.1952, 2.

<sup>43</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-950, Board of Immigration Files, Immigration Board and Bittner Case File. Letter to President General of UELCA and members of the UELCA Immigration Board from Muetzelfeldt, 9 October 1951, 4.

<sup>44</sup> LAA: UELCA Box 312-950, Board of Immigration Files, Immigration Board and Bittner Case File. Immigration Correspondence of the Bittner Group 1949-1950. See correspondence between Stolz and some of these remaining families about the possibility of their obtaining passage to Australia. For example letter to Stolz from Egon Glasenapp, Bad Harzburg, Germany, 15 September 1951; Stolz to Glasenapp, 18 December 1951; Glasenapp to Stolz, 2 January 1952.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz from Egon Glasenapp, Bad Harzburg, Germany, 15 September 1951, 1.

arrived group and that subsequently, unless he had the means to pay some of his travel costs upfront and direct to the LWF, he would have to wait for a considerable period of time before being able to come to Australia.<sup>46</sup> Glasenapp responded in January of the following year with the news that he was in a position to pay the sum of DM 2000 to the LWF before embarkation.<sup>47</sup> As we will see, however, by this time there was little hope of UELCA or the LWF granting more travel loans to Bittner group applicants.

Throughout 1951 Stolz felt keenly Bittner's low standing with the church, petitioning the Board of Immigration several times in support of Bittner.<sup>48</sup> Stolz wrote of Bittner, 'he is a sadly disillusioned man. He came here under the firm belief that he would immediately become a full fledged pastor of our Church and would receive his regular salary payments, as he did in his former Church'.<sup>49</sup> Stolz further argued that the Church should afford Bittner and his group more tolerance and understanding as 'the Bittner group people are really Churchly people, very different to other New Australians here in Adelaide'.<sup>50</sup> Stolz added that they should be afforded some leeway given their religious devotion, which was in stark contrast to the apathy or lack of faith we saw in the previous chapter.

Stolz's efforts were in vain, with Muetzelfeldt issuing a 14-page rebuttal to his defence of Bittner. In the document, Muetzelfeldt listed the charges leveled at Bittner: misrepresentation of the church, misquoting a board member, neglect of duty, deliberate refusal to cooperate, and failure to honour his promises. Muetzelfeldt expressed some suspicion of Stolz's strong defence of Bittner, reasoning in a separate letter to Pastor Lohe that perhaps there was 'some basical reason behind it all when Dr Stolz finds it necessary to engage in all these futile attempts to cover Bittner. That reason may well be certain commitments into which he entered with him'.<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, Muetzelfeldt had the backing of the UELCA Board of Immigration who did not believe Bittner's actions were justifiable. South Australian District President, Pastor Sander, wrote to Muetzelfeldt on the issue: 'Personally I believe that we can wait until our annual meeting next year to further consider resolution of Pastor Bittner's full-time

<sup>46</sup> LAA: Box 312-950, Board of Immigration Files, Immigration Board and Bittner Case File. Letter to Glasenapp from Stolz, 18 December 1951.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, letter to Stolz from Glasenapp, 2 January 1952.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* See also other letters from Stolz defending the Bittner position: Letter to Muetzelfeldt and Board of Immigration from Stolz, 22 October 1951; 25 October 1951; 26 October 1951; and 9 November 1951.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, letter to Board of Immigration members from Stolz, 2 November 1951, 5.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, letter to Pastor Lohe from Muetzelfeldt, 29 November 1951, 1.

appointment. As far as I am concerned we shall not appoint him.’<sup>52</sup> An earlier welcome to Bittner and his congregation in which UELCA lauded Pastor Bittner as ‘a valuable addition to our Church’ and expressed hope that ‘in the not too far distant future an opportunity will present itself for him to have full employment in our Church’ was officially rescinded in November 1951.<sup>53</sup> Thus in the space of one year Bittner’s fall from grace was complete.

Stolz, South Australian District President Pastor Sander, and Queensland District President and Board of Immigration Chairman Pastor Lohe met several times with Bittner between November and December 1951 in an attempt to salvage the situation.<sup>54</sup> Although alarmed at the amount of time being allocated to the Bittner case when so many other needy cases were sitting on his desk, Muetzelfeldt informed these men that further Bittner dealings were necessary until an apology was extracted from him.<sup>55</sup> Lohe finally reported in December 1951 that after heated discussions an understanding had been reached. Bittner had admitted his negligence in not repaying his loan and setting a bad example for his group. Bittner also resolved to send an amendment to his article in *Der Heimatbote* clearing up the misrepresentation and misquoting of the Board.<sup>56</sup> Still, overall sentiment towards Bittner and the problems he had caused UELCA by the end of 1951 was one of disappointment and antipathy.

The final word on Bittner’s fate came in the form of a circular issued by Muetzelfeldt to all District Presidents of UELCA: ‘as there are still matters of difference between the Immigration Board and Pastor Bittner, they be requested not to arrange for the calling of Pastor Bittner into the services of the Church’. Muetzelfeldt further informed the District Presidents that while the board had made efforts to reconcile their and the Church’s differences with Bittner, Bittner himself had refused to meet with the proposed delegation (Chairman, Executive Officer, and South Australian District representative) to further discuss the matter. Muetzelfeldt maintained that the resultant situation was in no way the fault of the Church or its representatives who had done all that could reasonably be expected of them to

<sup>52</sup> LAA: Box 312-950, Board of Immigration Files, Immigration Board and Bittner Case File. Letter to Muetzelfeldt from Pastor Sanders, 23 November 1951, 1.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz and Immigration Board Members from Muetzelfeldt, 16 November 1951, 1-14.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, letter to Lohe from Sander, 22 November 1951; letter to UELCA Board of Immigration from Sanders and Stolz, 26 November 1951; Letter to Muetzelfeldt from Lohe, 10 December 1951.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, letter to Stolz and Board of Immigration Members from Muetzelfeldt, 29 November 1951, 1-3; see also letter to Stolz and Board Members from Muetzelfeldt, 16 November 1951, 14.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, letter to Muetzelfeldt from Lohe, 10 December 1951, 1.

arrive at a resolution of differences.<sup>57</sup> Thus the personal ambitions of Pastor Bittner, the investment of Church and individual members' time in securing the fate of Bittner and his migrants, as well as the personal enmities and antipathies generated all hindered the successful settlement of this group of ethnic German refugees in Australia.

## **Conclusion**

This experience signalled the end of any targeted group migration schemes to Australia by UELCA in the immediate postwar years. We have witnessed how personal misunderstandings and differences in expectations between the Church and Pastor Bittner led to open hostility once Bittner and the first of his group had arrived in Australia. While the Bittner story does not alter the broad postwar history of the Lutheran Church of Australia, it does demonstrate some of the many pitfalls of the migration and settlement process. As we have seen generally throughout the thesis, postwar migrants faced all manner of difficulties settling into Australian society, from xenophobia and indifference on the part of Australians, to employment, isolation and mental health problems amongst the migrants themselves. However, for most of these migrants, there existed a non-sentimental overarching approach to coordination, communication and cooperation between government, agencies and individuals devoted to their re-settlement. Furthermore, while we know from the evidence of the Social Welfare Section in Chapter Two that spatial concentration of migrants and proximity to services had a positive impact on settlement, Bittner's expectation that his congregation remain together rather than be dispersed throughout the state was not necessary to ensure success of the settlement program. In the immediate postwar years migration worked largely because of the presence of two key elements: the involvement of bureaucracy in the assistance and settlement of migrants, and the presence of people on the ground dealing with migrants establishing relationships of reciprocity and negotiation that ultimately made migrant settlement easier. Of course both spatial and ethnic concentration made migrant settlement easier, and almost certainly assisted the development of ethnic community networks and support services that flourished into the multicultural era.<sup>58</sup> However, in this chapter what we have seen is that, regardless of ethnic and spatial concentration, where reciprocal processes and relationships

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<sup>57</sup> LAA: Box 312-950, Board of Immigration Files, Immigration Board and Bittner Case File. National Circular to District Presidents of UELCA from Muetzelfeldt, 29 February 1952, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Jupp, *White Australia to Woomera*, 27-29.

broke down there was not necessarily failure, but settlement was slightly more arduous and could end as Bittner's story ends, less happily than others.

Bittner's personal journey ended a few short years later when, having continued his factory employment in Adelaide and having never gained a position with the church, he died.<sup>59</sup> Stolz continued in his personal quest to help migrants, working tirelessly alongside Zinnbauer across Adelaide, and through the Adelaide City and Migrant Mission Committee and the UELCA Board of Immigration. At age 77 Stolz scaled back his commitments after the loss of his wife two years earlier in 1953. Stolz finally passed away in Adelaide in 1962.<sup>60</sup> Pastor Muetzelfeldt continued in his roles with UELCA, his chaplaincy at Bonegilla, and his directorship of the LWF Australia until called to service at the Geneva headquarters of the LWF in 1961. The Church likewise continued in its commitments to welfare support, charitable duties and general provision of pastoral care amongst the settled Australian migrant community, eventually merging, as we saw in the previous chapter, with ELCA to form one Lutheran Church of Australia in 1966. By 1966, rather than a homogenised institution, the church could reasonably be called a 'multi-ethnic' community of Australian Lutherans.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Factory work and the migration experience had finally taken its toll on Pastor Bittner. Further research is necessary to uncover the details of Bittner's congregational members.

<sup>60</sup> *Advertiser*, Funeral Notices, Thursday 27 August 1953, 20.

<sup>61</sup> Maurice Schild and Philip Hughes, *The Lutherans in Australia*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996), 11.

## 5

## **The Good Neighbour Movement: local need, government policy and national rhetoric**

The Good Neighbour Movement (GNM) of Australia was established in direct response to Australia's postwar immigration program under Arthur Calwell in 1949.<sup>1</sup> Modeled on the New Settlers League which had been founded during the 1920s to assist the settlement of British migrants in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, the postwar GNM was responsible for providing the 'personal element' and 'neighbourly support' that government bureaucracy could not bring to migrant assimilation.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the 1950s the GNM brought together a large number of existing community organisations across Australia in an effort to extend the hand of friendship to new migrants. Its primary objective was the assimilation of postwar migrants, a goal that ultimately failed as the GNM outlived its usefulness as a tool of assimilation by the 1960s and the government increasingly recognised the rights of migrants to assert themselves within the national community. As this chapter will demonstrate, regardless of its longer-term failure to meet its original objectives, the GNM's tactical operations on the ground throughout the 1950s contributed to the growing national dialogue around migrant settlement and the coordination of services designed better to meet the needs of Australian citizens and postwar migrants. The example of the GNM, uniquely placed between bureaucracy and grass roots providers, presents a combined top down and bottom up approach to the sources which furthers our understanding of what was happening at this crucial time. The example of the GNM demonstrates how assimilation policy was implemented at a grass roots level. What this implementation reveals is the personal agency of tirelessly hard-working individuals operating at a local level but within a nation-wide government-directed, planned and organised model of migrant assimilation and settlement. Ultimately the merging of these two elements, of localised personal agency and bureaucratic national policy, resulted in flexible administration and implementation of migrant settlement services. As we will see, the unforeseen consequence of this approach was the evolution of assimilation and settlement policy as a direct result of the interplay between local needs, government policy and national

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<sup>1</sup> Tavan, 'Good Neighbours,' 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> New Settlers Leagues continued in these states until the mid-1950s when all were encompassed by the GNM of Australia. Michael James Kelly, 'A Social History of the Good Neighbour Councils of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, 1949-71,' MA thesis, Latrobe University, 1979, 61. See also Jenkins, 'Political Elites,' 222.

rhetoric. This chapter, then, brings the thesis full circle, building on what we have already learnt of this reciprocal ‘process’. It reveals how the coordinated efforts and communications of all involved came together to subtly shift government and community perspectives and ultimately pave the way for the policy liberalisations of the 1970s and 1980s.

This chapter examines the actions and manoeuvrings of the GNM of Australia, and specifically the Good Neighbour Council (GNC) of SA, as the government’s mandated implementer of immigration policy at a community and ‘neighbourhood’ level. Building on the argument of Parts One and Two of the thesis, this chapter helps us to understand better the evolution of postwar assimilationist policy from both a top down and bottom up perspective. Part Three, then, is where the macro and micro elements of the thesis come together to best explain what was transpiring in postwar Australian society under the guise of migrant assimilation. As we have seen thus far through the examples of the Australian Citizenship Conventions (ACC), the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (CIAC), the Department of Immigration and its Social Welfare Section, Australian Lutheranism, and now the GNM, this approach was largely successful because of the government’s recognition of the need for the ‘personal approach’ to settling migrants. The ultimate goal of maintaining social cohesion could not be achieved or sustained through administrative and departmental avenues alone, but more directly through local communities, organisations and individuals that came into daily contact with migrants. As we will see, this recognition allowed for the growth of a dialogue around migrant assimilation and the liberal implementation of policy on the ground.

Most postwar Australian immigration studies acknowledge that much good work was achieved by the GNM through well meaning individuals. Scholars also acknowledge that this work varied greatly between different branches of the movement, given its primary reliance on an essentially untrained volunteer group of Australian citizens. Jupp observed in 1966 that while ‘any form of assistance is better than none’ it seemed to him that ‘the original conception had outlived its usefulness’.<sup>3</sup> A migrant himself and writing at a crucial time in Australian’s immigration history, where immigration policy had moved on from the narrowly defined assimilationist period but had not yet reached multiculturalism, Jupp proposed a more ethnic oriented model of service provision for migrants. Seven years before Labour Minister

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<sup>3</sup> Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, 149.



Al Grassby proclaimed Australia a multicultural state, Jupp was advocating for ethnic communities and consequently the disenfranchisement of the GNM.

Jupp and social historian MJ Kelly both argue that during its most effective years the GNM was better equipped to help British than non-British migrants.<sup>4</sup> The work of Martin challenges this by demonstrating how in South Australia at least, there were not just individual instances of good neighbourliness towards migrants, but a formalised process of migrant consultation. Martin argues that the National Advisory Committee, which operated in the first instance from 1951 to the early 1960s, was ‘an effective link between certain segments of the minorities and the [State] Council, and through the Council, the Commonwealth government itself’.<sup>5</sup> Still, more recent works from Jordens and Jenkins advance Martin’s overall observation that ‘in practice, member organisations have varied enormously in their contributions to the movement’.<sup>6</sup> Tavan contributes to this argument, concluding that the GNCs, along with the ACCs, played a crucial role in advancing government propaganda, and that the cultural biases of the mainly middle-class members of the GNM rendered its support largely insensitive and irrelevant to the needs of migrants.<sup>7</sup> In spite of this, Tavan argues, by the end of the decade organisations such as the GNM were abandoning the assimilationist model with ‘surprising ease and rapidity’ as migrants resisted its attempts to absorb them completely into the dominant culture.<sup>8</sup> Jenkins, in particular, furthers the work of Tavan, arguing that the GNM, and specifically the GNC of New South Wales, were agents of the political elite who ultimately failed in their mandated task of assimilation and citizenship education.<sup>9</sup> My argument is distinguished from what has come before by asking different questions of the evidence to reveal a more comprehensive picture of what was taking place at this crucial period of Australia’s immigration history.

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<sup>4</sup> Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, 150; MJ Kelly, ‘Social History of the GNCs,’ Summary, 336, quoted in Jenkins, ‘Political Elites,’ 23.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Martin, *Community and Identity: refugee groups in Adelaide* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1972), 103.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 103. See also Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 85-87, 90-91; Jenkins, ‘Political Elites,’ Chapter Five, esp. 203, 206-207.

<sup>7</sup> Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours,’ 84.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, 89.

<sup>9</sup> Jenkins, ‘Political Elites,’ 202; as we will see, the GNM of Australia consisted of individual state-based Good Neighbour Councils and New Settler Leagues. By the late 1950s existing New Settler Leagues had undergone name changes and been incorporated entirely into the GNM of Australia. See Kelly, ‘Social History of the GNCs,’ 80-93.

## The sources

We have already learnt much about the GNM's work in receiving and settling postwar European migrants across Australia. In Chapter One we witnessed the GNM's engagement with the national dialogue concerning migrant assimilation and citizenship at the ACCs, as well as hearing of its local community work through the reports of the Department of Immigration's advisory body, the CIAC. In Chapter Two we learnt of the systematic establishment and support of suburban and regional GNCs by departmental social workers as well as being introduced to some of the GNCs' early work with migrants through the reports of these social workers. Chapter Three demonstrated the representative nature of the GNC in South Australia through the involvement of representatives such as Pastor Zinnbauer of the UELCA, a community leader working at the coal face of migrant reception and settlement in postwar Australia. This chapter, then, brings the argument full circle by examining how local initiatives and government rhetoric were negotiated within the Department of Immigration's 'managed' postwar assimilationist structures. Minutes of the Executive and General Committee meetings of the GNC of South Australia (GNC of SA) from 1949 to 1960, annual conference proceedings between 1953 and 1960, nation-wide GNM publications and print media, state-based GNC newsletters, correspondence files of individual South Australian GNC branches, and ACC and correspondence files of the Department of Immigration all provide evidence of this relationship between local initiatives and government policy.

An examination of the local activities of the GNC, together with the assimilationist rhetoric of the period provides evidence of how assimilationist policy was interpreted, negotiated and implemented at a grass roots level. The growing dialogue around the negotiation of government policy was in large part due to the coordinating function of the GNC. Martin acknowledged this coordinating role of the GNC in *Community and Identity* (1972), even if by the 1960s state and regional branches had moved towards a model of direct service provision.<sup>10</sup> However, the GNM's early efforts at grass roots assistance, its mandate of assimilation, and the movement's direct relationships with the Department of Immigration and other established community service providers enabled the GNM to act as a bridge and buffer between the seemingly uncompromising government rhetoric and bureaucracy and the day to day settlement needs of migrants in the community. More importantly the position of the

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<sup>10</sup> Martin, *Community and Identity*, 101; see also Martin, *Migrant Presence*, 79.

GNM and individual GNCs provided a framework and mechanism within which Australian citizens, and increasingly migrants, participated in a subtle negotiation, interpretation and implementation of policy that was modified according to local need. This chapter then, as a localised study of broader national policy machinations, allows us to return to the larger thesis. Its focus on localised grass roots assistance within a broader national framework enables an examination of the sources from both the top down and bottom up approaches. This chapter contributes to our understanding of this period of Australian immigration history as not simply the wholesale rejection of assimilationist rhetoric by the 1960s, but an interpretation of it through the personal agency of individual GNM members at a grass roots level, operating within a structured and organised framework of government support.

### **Conduit for change: bureaucracy, agency and the GNM**

In 1949 the GNC of SA was established as part of Calwell's nation wide call for good neighbours to provide newly arriving migrants with 'personal friendship, neighbourly companionship, community of cultural interests and mateyness on the job'.<sup>11</sup> Hazel Dobson, in her capacity as head of the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section, addressed a meeting of South Australia's government, business and community leaders where a resolution was passed appointing a provisional Good Neighbour Committee in that state, 'with a view to promoting and coordinating social work on behalf of all immigrants, whether British or alien'.<sup>12</sup> Mr Reginald Joseph Coombe, a magistrate and Chairman of the South Australian Council of Social Service, was appointed to the provisional committee, along with Mr Ashton, South Australian Deputy Director of Immigration, Mrs V Shepherd, President of the National Council for Women, Reverend EH Woollacott, Council of Churches, and Mr KF Newman, Council of Charitable and Relief Organisations. At the first meeting of the provisional committee on 14 July 1949 the Good Neighbour Council of SA was formally instituted with Mr Coombe appointed its inaugural President.<sup>13</sup> This initial meeting was presided over by the

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<sup>11</sup> NAA: A445/261/6/5. Arthur Calwell, *Tomorrow's Australians*, Bulletin of the Department of Immigration, Canberra, 14 February 1949, quoted in Tavan, 'Good Neighbours,' 78.

<sup>12</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1, Good Neighbour Council of South Australia, Minutes of Executive Council Meetings. Open letter regarding formation of the GNC of South Australia from Mr R Coombe, SA Council of Social Service, 1 July 1949. Refer also to Chapter Two for an account of Dobson's instrumental role in establishing and expanding the work of the Commonwealth Social Welfare Section amongst migrants in the early years of the immigration program.

<sup>13</sup> Coombe was active on the Council's executive committee for twenty-six years and served as president in 1949-51 and again in 1963-65. Brendan Moran, 'Coombe, Reginald Joseph (Reg) (1899-1985),' *Australian Dictionary*

Honorable Thomas Playford, Premier of South Australia and state Minister for Immigration, who praised all who were helping to ‘absorb’ new Australians into the community.<sup>14</sup>

The South Australian branch was quite active throughout the state. Within twelve months of its formation, that is by the end of 1950, the GNC of SA had helped establish over seven branches in metropolitan and regional areas. By the end of 1954 there were twenty-two branches in operation across the state.<sup>15</sup> These included regional areas with high concentrations of migrant labour such as Tailem Bend, Lobethal, Penola, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Keith, Mallalla, Port Augusta, Quorn, Whyalla, Millicent, Bordertown, Waikerie, Loxton, Renmark, and suburban Salisbury, Woodville and Glenelg. Many of these regional and suburban branches were strategically formed to service large numbers of newly arrived migrants placed as part of their two-year work contracts.

From its inception the South Australian branch of the GNC had the support of many highly placed public servants. Mr GAM Edson, Commonwealth Migration Officer (CMO) for South Australia, was coopted to the Executive Committee only one week after its formation, followed closely by Secretary Mr CW Goyder, from the Australian Broadcasting Commission.<sup>16</sup> At the first full meeting of its Executive Committee the council resolved to amend the newly adopted Constitution of the GNC of SA to include extra executive members including representatives from trade unions, rural and youth interest groups, and ex-service personnel.<sup>17</sup> At this meeting Coombe, as Chairman of the South Australian Council of Social Service, expressed the view that his council ‘did not wish to retain any controlling interest in any Good Neighbour Council to be formed’. Still it is relevant to note that the formative days of the GNC in South Australia were heavily influenced by senior public servants from

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*of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/coombe-reginald-joseph-reg-12349/text22187>, accessed 22 June 2011.

<sup>14</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 14 July 1949, 1.

<sup>15</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/29. President’s Reports, 1951-1960; SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meetings, Adelaide: 11 January 1950, 28 February 1950, 12 July 1950, 7 November 1950, 29 November 1950. See also NAA: A445, 112/3/5. GNC of South Australia General File. Letter to Heyes, Department of Immigration, from Mary Williams, Secretary GNC of SA, listing of branches to date, 7 November 1952, 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 22 July 1949, 1. During the 1930s and 1940s CW Goyder had worked for the BBC and All-India Radio in Calcutta and Singapore before returning to Australia in July 1946. *The Straits Times*, 24 July 1946, 5; *The Straits Times*, 20 January 1937, 1.

<sup>17</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 22 July 1949, 1. The Constitution of the GNC of SA was initially adopted from an earlier version of the NSW branch, established 2 years previously, with a view to making amendments as soon as was practicably possible. See also SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 14 July 1949, 1.

immigration, social welfare, and industry backgrounds, as well as private enterprise and broader community and religious bodies.<sup>18</sup> Tavan argues that a ‘large corps of women volunteers and [associated] member organisations such as the Young Women’s Christian Association and the Country Women’s Association’ resulted in the GNM being primarily a vehicle for ‘selling the “Australian Way of Life” to migrants’.<sup>19</sup> The South Australian executive suggests this was not necessarily so. We will continue to see, in South Australia at least, that wide government and community representation enabled the GNC to operate more effectively than Tavan suggests.

The primary goal of the GNC of SA was outlined in its constitution, drawn up between 1949 and 1950. It undertook to:

promote co-operation between all voluntary organisations directly or indirectly concerned with matters relevant to the selection, reception, protection, assimilation and after-care of migrants coming to Australia.

Further to this, the constitution stated that the council would ‘supplement where necessary the activities of such organisations’ and that the above aims would be ‘attained through co-operation with the Government’.<sup>20</sup> The objectives of the council were redefined twelve months later when the constitution was amended and the aim restated: ‘to obtain for all immigrants residing in South Australia their assimilation into the Australian way of life in a manner which will provide maximum benefit to the Nation and themselves’. The council’s stated methods provided for the coordination and cooperation of efforts through member organisations, individuals, and commonwealth and state government bodies.<sup>21</sup>

In its formative years the role of the GNC of SA was repeatedly articulated in the language of assimilation. As Tavan and Jenkins have shown, the primary language of the entire GNM throughout Australia was assimilationist in flavour, as assimilation was indeed its *raison d’être*.<sup>22</sup> However, once again if we look past the rhetoric we gain a better understanding of

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<sup>18</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 14 July 1949, 1. The Executive Committee were officially elected at the first General Council Meeting held on 7 September 1949. The Committee consisted of President Coombe, Vice President V Shepherd, Vice President Mr Dudley Matthews, Treasurer Mr TV Johnson, Secretary CW Goyder, assistant Secretary Miss Bennell, and normal executive members Mr Newman, Mr Thompsom, Mr Edson, Colonel Fiddock, Reverend Woollacott, Mr Ashton, Mrs Harley Hooper, Mr P Ifould, Pastor Alfred Zinnbauer and Reverend Vowles.

<sup>19</sup> Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours,’ 82.

<sup>20</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/27. Draft Constitution of the Good Neighbour Council of South Australia, July 1949, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, Constitution of the Good Neighbour Council of South Australia, adopted 20 October 1950.

<sup>22</sup> See Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’; and Jenkins, ‘Political Elites’.

what was actually taking place amongst GNC members and community groups. In 1950 the national GNM published a thirteen-page booklet, in conjunction with the Department of Immigration, informing citizens of the role of the GNM in Australia. In this publication the GNC was described as a 'nationwide, voluntary organisation formed with the basic objective of assisting the satisfactory assimilation of every migrant into the national family'. It went further to say that the council was 'not a functional organisation' but rather, that it enabled:

the co-ordinated effort of churches and other bodies which, while retaining their autonomy and freedom of action, have voluntarily formed themselves into co-ordinating councils whereby they can readily and conveniently co-operate with each other and with governments and other agencies in honorary work to assist in the assimilation of all migrants.<sup>23</sup>

In defining its mandate of assimilation, the council acknowledged that it could take many forms. For its purposes, a workable definition articulated assimilation as 'the process of introducing new settlers into the local population so that the benefits may be mutual'. They went on to explain that the process of assimilation was one of:

give and take - a two way process. It requires patience, understanding and goodwill on both sides. It requires Australians to offer the hand of friendship and to make allowance for differences in mannerisms or accent of the newly arrived. It requires the newcomers to try to learn and appreciate the customs and traditions of their new homeland and to live in harmony with themselves and with their new fellow citizens.<sup>24</sup>

It becomes evident that behind the assimilationist rhetoric of the GNM the organisation's actual pragmatic approach to migrant settlement echoes what we have seen throughout this thesis. That is, a two way process with policy negotiated and modified according to local need.

The CIAC reported at its eleventh meeting in 1950 that in light of all the practical assimilation problems facing migrants such as housing, language skills, racial antagonisms, work placements, and separation of families, it was 'the personal element which was the most effective means of making newcomers feel at home and that they belong in Australia'. To this end the CIAC acknowledged the work of the GNM which was already doing much to make the migrant feel welcome in the Australian community. The CIAC concluded that the representative nature of the GNCs uniquely placed them 'to meet the many and varied personal and family difficulties of the newcomer', and that they should be congratulated and

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<sup>23</sup> *A Handbook of the Good Neighbour Movement. To assist people interested in the assimilation of migrants* (Commonwealth Department of Immigration, Canberra, 1950).

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

supported in their endeavours. The CIAC also acknowledged that while these coordinating bodies were ‘independent of Government direction of authority’, they were co-operating with both the State and Commonwealth Governments in the nationally important matter of assimilation.<sup>25</sup> While arguably self congratulatory in tone, this statement offers important evidence of the developing pattern of communication, awareness and cooperation towards a common goal at government, department, agency, and community levels.

The early observations and recommendations of the department’s CIAC reveal the tensions within the government’s rhetoric of assimilation. On the one hand the policy of assimilation was to be pursued whereby migrants adopted entirely the Australian way of life, but on the other hand it was the personal and social difficulties experienced by migrants that needed to be overcome if the process of assimilation was to succeed. JT Massey addressed the 11<sup>th</sup> Immigration Advisory Council meeting on this issue and highlighted the problems militating against assimilation, which included the ‘learning of English, racial and national antagonisms, differences in the preparation of food, technical and professional men in uncongenial occupations, signs of segregation, separation of families, and non-English speaking families’.<sup>26</sup> Thus even Departmental officers recognised that implementation of assimilationist policy clearly lent itself to the more practical concerns of settlement and adjustment to society rather than the dogmatic administrative enforcement of ‘assimilation’ into that society. Addressing these issues in the interests of achieving assimilation (and social cohesion) required all to develop a degree of understanding of the migrant situation.

During their years of operation, the individual state-based GNC committees continually challenged the Australian public to engage in the assimilationist work of settling migrants. Employing a similar discourse to the Commonwealth Government, the GNC went one step further, qualifying ‘assimilation’ as a process of settlement rather than one of ‘becoming invisible within the Australian culture’. A 1952 newsletter of the GNC of Western Australia appealed to the duty of all Australian citizens to aid this process of migrant settlement:

The organisations of the GNC and New Settlers Leagues throughout Australia have a great chance to become the ‘spirit’ of Australia’s immigration ... Without a sincere desire on the part of much of the Australian community to help newcomers and absorb

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<sup>25</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/11. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 11th Meeting, 11 August 1950. Agenda item no. 12, Assimilation of Migrants, 1.

<sup>26</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/11. Minute no. 275, Agenda item no.12, Assimilation of Migrants, 8.

them wholeheartedly into Australia, the success of the scheme will remain on paper only. The population of Australia will have increased in numbers, but unity, goodwill and happiness will not have increased in proportion.

The article went on to seek the help of the Western Australian community which had already shown itself eager to shoulder this responsibility, and who had ‘the chance to give life and meaning to Australia’s reception of her immigrants’.<sup>27</sup> As we saw in Chapter One through the orchestration of the ACCs, similar appeals were being echoed throughout Australia at this time in an effort to propagate and inspire community involvement in this vitally important ‘assimilationist’ work.

### **Collaboration: a non-bureaucratic approach to migrant assimilation**

Implementation of assimilationist policy did not always grow organically within the GNC. Assimilationist policy was continually bolstered and disseminated to the GNC through bureaucratic channels. As we have seen, government rhetoric, print media, ACCs, departmental circulars, correspondence, and ministerial speeches were all effective means of dissemination. Evidence of this can be seen at the third executive committee meeting of the GNC of SA in 1949. Calwell, then Minister for Immigration, addressed the committee on the difficulties of assimilation. Calwell articulated the government’s commitment to assimilation in financial terms, assuring the committee that ‘he gave his wholehearted support to the project’.<sup>28</sup> Subsequent to this meeting and the promises made by Calwell, paid positions for crucial executive members were funded by Canberra, along with office spaces, furniture, facilities and an operating account for the conducting of GNC activities towards the goal of migrant assimilation.<sup>29</sup> Thus began in earnest the collaborative approach between commonwealth, state and local organisations towards the common goal of social cohesion through migrant assimilation.

Even with this commitment, financial matters were a constant point of tension for the Department of Immigration, revealing differing bureaucratic approaches to immigration from within the government. The tensions between the Departments of Treasury and Immigration

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<sup>27</sup> *Newsletter of GNC of Western Australia*, no. 1, 27 May 1952, 1.

<sup>28</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 17 August 1949, 1. Calwell promised to return to Canberra for higher level discussions of the financial requirements of such undertakings after hearing the plans, ambitions, and concerns of the South Australian GNC committee.

<sup>29</sup> This funding was made available to all state-based GNCs.



were political in nature, and no doubt Holt's relatively newly-formed Department of Immigration felt keenly the need to assert its presence in the Menzies Government.<sup>30</sup> The following example illustrates the Department of Immigration's commitment to the need for local autonomy in implementing assimilationist policy. As we have seen already, the Department of Treasury often questioned the allocation of immigration program funds, whether for the conducting of the national Citizenship Conventions as seen in Chapter One, the production of migrant publications and publicity brochures, or the funding of GNCs. In March 1951 a war of letters ensued between Heyes and the Secretary and Senior Finance Officers of the Department of Treasury when Treasury refused to pay a number of bills incurred by the Adelaide GNC office. Treasury argued that the expenditure seemed 'extravagant and much of it outside the functions of what the Good Neighbour Council would appear to require'. Ironically this comment was preceded by an acknowledgement that the finance officer was actually unaware 'of the functions of the Good Neighbour Council' but that it did appear to him that many of the accounts would be queried anyway. This highlights a fundamental difference in the approach of the two departments towards the program. The Department of Treasury's response is reminiscent of a stereotypical bureaucratic approach, while the Department of Immigration's response suggests a more autonomous and flexible model. It was this non-bureaucratic approach by the Department of Immigration that fostered local autonomy and personal agency.

In the example of the GNC of SA, Treasury specifically took issue with the operation of a cafeteria out of the council's city premises through which they were 'making charge for services' that had been supplied. Treasury was informed by the state financial officer that:

no approval appears to have been obtained for the charges for coffee and biscuits or sandwiches and she [Miss Williams] has also opened up an account at the Commonwealth Savings Bank in the name of the Good Neighbour Council. Here again no authority appears to have been obtained.

The finance officer then wrote that he assumed the Department of Immigration would 'take the necessary action regarding the carrying on of the cafeteria and the accounts which have not been properly authorised'.<sup>31</sup> On receipt of this letter, Treasury wrote to Heyes for an explanation of the financial activities of the GNC of SA. Heyes defended the GNC and their

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<sup>30</sup> Richards argues that the Minister for Immigration held a relatively low position within government at this time, not normally even attending cabinet meetings. Richards, *Destination Australia*, 238.

<sup>31</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. Letter to Secretary, Department of Treasury, from Mr S O'Brien, 21 February 1951, 1.

right to the expenditure, emphasising their voluntary and autonomous nature. He strongly emphasized that the work they were undertaking ‘in the implementation of the Government’s assimilation policy is regarded as of extreme importance and the people comprising the Good Neighbour Council of South Australia are proving particularly helpful in this field’. In conclusion Heyes advised Treasury that it would be unwise to dampen the enthusiasm of the GNC or restrict their efforts by withholding government funding as ‘the success of the scheme rests to a large extent in the hands of these Councils and New Settlers Leagues’.<sup>32</sup> Treasury replied unfavourably to Heyes but did approve some of the expenditure.<sup>33</sup> Allowing for such tensions and interdepartmental power struggles, this example demonstrates the Department of Immigration’s early commitment to a national dialogue around the implementation of assimilation and the creation of a space within which agencies could interpret and negotiate policy according to local needs.

### **Collaboration: a non-bureaucratic approach to migrant assimilation**

As we saw in Chapter One, the ACCs provide a very explicit example of the administrative and social collaboration that grew around migrant assimilation during the 1950s. As a community group engaged in the task of assimilation, the GNC attended all ACCs to consider both the ways and means of implementing and overcoming the problems of migrant assimilation and the promotion of citizenship. In November 1949 the Prime Minister issued an invitation for GNC delegates to attend the first annual ACC in January 1950. The South Australian branch was afforded two delegate places at the convention and President Coombe and Secretary Goyder were unanimously chosen to attend. In an early example of the council’s coordinating role, Coombe and Goyder facilitated a South Australian ‘pre-convention’ meeting of all invited government, community and industry delegates to discuss issues and possible agenda items from a state perspective.<sup>34</sup> Later that month at an executive GNC of SA meeting, attended by Departmental officer JT Massey in his capacity as convenor of the Commonwealth Citizenship Conventions, the upcoming convention was discussed. Massey invited the committee to forward him any suggestions for consideration on the Convention agenda. He emphasised that ‘any suggestions at all would be considered’ and that he hoped in the near future it would be possible for a third delegate to be invited from the GNC of SA

<sup>32</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. Letter to Secretary, Department of Treasury, from Heyes, 12 March 1951, 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, letter to Heyes from Secretary, Department of Treasury, 27 March 1951.

<sup>34</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 16 November 1949, 1.

executive committee.<sup>35</sup> This proved to be the case, and Mrs Vonda Shepherd was proposed and unanimously voted to attend by the committee two weeks later.<sup>36</sup> This example of the GNC of SA's coordinated approach towards the ACCs is demonstrative of the social and administrative collaboration that we have seen time and again emerging around the government's policy of migrant assimilation. It emphasises that to best understand how this collaboration and coordination was facilitated at the government, agency and community levels we must employ a combined top down and bottom up approach to this period of history and to the evidence at hand.

Agenda suggestions for the upcoming ACC were discussed at the GNC of SA's December 1949 General Council Meeting, attended by the executive committee and representatives from member organisations. Representatives included the Girl Guides, Council of Churches, League of Women Voters, Cornish Association, Churches of Christ Social Service Department, Boy Scouts, Commonwealth Department of Immigration, Student Christian Movement, SA Railways, Australian Association of Social Workers, Tourist Information Bureau, Lutheran City Mission, and the volunteer friendship society Toc H.<sup>37</sup> The outcome of this general meeting was a total of five possible Convention items for consideration in Canberra the following month. The items centred on the provision of public library materials for migrants in English and European languages, additional worker camps and hostels for British migrants, shipboard language classes for European adult migrants, and the placement of migrants in employment commensurate with their skills and training.<sup>38</sup> From its very infancy, in the first six months of operation, the GNC of SA was establishing relationships, procedures and methods of communication and cooperation with government, industry, community and voluntary groups that would come to form the cornerstone of their efforts for the better part of the next decade.

Subsequent Citizenship Conventions proved fertile ground for the growth of the GNM. In April 1951, at a meeting of the South Australian Council, delegates to the Convention

<sup>35</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 30 November 1949. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 14 December 1949, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Toc H is a voluntary friendly society with its origins in Belgium during the First World War. It began in Australia in 1925 and has been active in South Australia for over eighty years. The current aim of Toc H Australia is to 'build better communities by reaching out to all in friendship and service, confronting prejudices and practicing Christian values'. 'Homepage', TocH website, accessed 10 December, 2010, <http://www.toch.org.au/>.

<sup>38</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of General Council Meeting, Adelaide, 12 December 1949, 2.

reflected on its importance. One representative explained how the Convention had helped him answer the question many Australian organisations had: ‘Where does my own organisation fit into the assimilation programme?’. The rate of migration, he argued, ‘must bring terrific problems. This [then] is a job for us all’. In acknowledging the widespread apathy and resentment of Australians towards migrants, the delegate issued the following challenge to his fellow GNC members: ‘it is we who can, by example, encourage others to interest themselves actively in this job’.<sup>39</sup> This, then, was the challenge of the GNM of Australia and the basis upon which policy was interpreted and implemented.

### **Building networks: community representation**

Influential and well placed Council members enabled the effective operation of the GNC of SA. Immediately after its establishment in 1949 the council sought to develop a wide network of government, community and voluntary contacts to be utilised in the field of migrant settlement and assimilation. This representation allowed the council to permeate the wider community including through church, voluntary, sporting, industry and government organisations, as well as individuals. The common link of this network was the GNC of SA, its committees, and state and regional branches. This enabled direct communication with a large range of organisations including the YMCA, the Lutheran and Catholic Churches, the South Australian Railways (SAR) and the Department of Immigration. This communication was vital to the successful discharging of the Council’s role. Thus, these coordinating councils across Australia, and specifically the GNC of SA, acted to assist and regulate the activities of branches established throughout the state where migrant populations existed.

It is becoming evident that the coordinating role of the GNC of SA and the influence of its broad executive representation were developing as early as 1949. Assistant secretary, Miss Bennell, representing the YWCA, reported in September that after discussions with her Board they had agreed to extend their ‘Open House’ social occasions to all New Australians and friends by November of that year.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, executive and ordinary GNC committee members were busy organising Christmas social events for migrants amongst their respective member organisations. For example the National Council for Women were providing

<sup>39</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of General Council Meeting, Adelaide, 17 April 1951, 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 7 September 1949, 1; SLSA: SRG 703/2/1, Series 2, v.1-4 Good Neighbour Council [box 1]. Council Meeting Minutes. Folder [1950-51].

Christmas trees and toys for 350 primary school children at the Woodside Migrant Centre; the Red Cross Society were visiting sick migrants in hospital; the UELCA was holding a Christmas party for migrant women; and the YMCA had plans for entertaining British and European migrants at Christmas and the new year.<sup>41</sup> And while it is debatable that these efforts were of any significance to the ‘real’ problems and situations of migrants, these examples demonstrate the early activities of the GNC of SA towards the process of communication and coordination of services. Already, that is by 1949, the Council’s representative nature enabled it to communicate with and access the services of a wide variety of community bodies, a process that became integral to the coordinating efforts of the GNM.

Encompassing a large cross-section of society, the GNM of Australia also had access to many high level departmental employees, which served to strengthen its representative nature. This relationship facilitated a fluid exchange of information about the immigration and settlement programs at all levels of the community. Massey, coordinator of the ACCs and the Department of Immigration’s National Coordinator of Voluntary Assimilation Activities, frequently travelled to and attended state-based GNC executive committee meetings.<sup>42</sup> He brought with him expertise and knowledge of the workings of the Department of Immigration and in particular the ACCs. In South Australia Massey regularly attended GNC meetings along with the state based Commonwealth Migration Officer, Mr Edson, who had been appointed to the executive committee in July 1949.<sup>43</sup> The presence of departmental officials aided in the dissemination of information to representative members of the council, and ultimately to the relevant community groups dealing locally with migrant settlement issues. Jupp, Tavan and Jenkins draw conclusions about the viability of the GNC based on its ‘tokenistic’ assistance to migrants and its irrelevance to the needs of migrant communities.<sup>44</sup> However, the example of GNM representatives such as Massey and Edson reveal that despite the Council’s inability to engage meaningfully with migrant communities,<sup>45</sup> what is important in the context of this thesis is what its activities reveal of the process. The formal functioning of the GNC provided a conduit between government and community groups engaged in assimilationist work which

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<sup>41</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 4 November 1949, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Jenkins, ‘Political Elites,’ 153-154, 197.

<sup>43</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 22 July 1949.

<sup>44</sup> See Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, 149; Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours,’ 82-84; Jenkins, ‘Political Elites,’ 202, 204, 222.

<sup>45</sup> Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, 149.

better enabled the negotiation and delivery of increasingly well informed migrant settlement services.

By its very nature as a representative community body, the GNM became an implicit resource for government, community and migrant bodies concerning all manner of immigration, settlement and assimilation issues. The GNC of SA's broad membership base enabled access to experts in the fields of settlement and assimilation policy. The meetings of the GNC of SA, and its executive and general committee meetings, along with annual State Conferences from 1953 onwards, offer insight into this little acknowledged function of the Council.<sup>46</sup> For example, at an executive committee meeting in 1950 clarification was sought on a hostel issue, to which end Mr Chambers, executive GNC of SA member and Regional Director of Accommodation for Migrants in Hostels, was on hand. President Coombes acknowledged that Chambers' 'attendance at future meetings will simplify the committee's activities' and importantly achieve pragmatic outcomes.<sup>47</sup> Thus Coombes alluded to the important dialogue that was accruing from the representative nature of the GNC of SA.

Examples of the dissemination of knowledge at committee level surface again and again in the minutes of GNC of SA meetings. When a regional branch representative approached the executive with a question about establishing English classes for migrants in regional towns in 1953, executive Council member and Officer in Charge of Migrant Education, Mr Sansom, was on hand to answer that if a group of six or more interested migrants could be identified, then a class could be arranged for them.<sup>48</sup> In this instance, not only did the regional delegate receive crucial information about English language classes for migrants in his area, but he was also able to make contact with the very departmental officer who could help facilitate the establishment of those language classes. These personal and professional networks created through the GNC were invaluable at a local community level where a small number of well intentioned Australian citizens were extending the hand of friendship to migrant arrivals. What these examples reveal is that at state and local levels the GNC acted as conduit between government, community groups and citizens, giving all a voice in the national conversation

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<sup>46</sup> It is more often stressed that the Good Neighbour Movement was an arm of the Government, and as such an assimilationist tool that failed to cater to the real needs of migrants. See Tavan, 'Good Neighbours'; Jenkins, 'Political Elites'; and Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*.

<sup>47</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 20 September 1950, 1.

<sup>48</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/21, GNC State Conference Papers 1953-1972. Proceedings of the 1st State Conference in South Australia, 30-31 October 1953, 35.

over the needs of migrants. Tavan argues that this conversation was not inclusive of migrants, reasoning that ‘middle-class’ elitism and a suspicion of difference barred their way until the 1960s.<sup>49</sup> However, as we have seen and will continue to see, this conversation became incrementally more inclusive of migrants.

The GNC’s networking role helped demystify many of the official processes and procedures of the Australian Government with regard to immigration and assimilation. This in turn led to greater understanding and cooperation amongst GNC representatives and the wider community. One such example was the presence on the GNC of SA executive council of Mr Edson, South Australian CMO. Edson’s attendance at meetings kept delegates and member organisations informed of bureaucratic processes and the motivations underpinning government policy. Edson, a state-based public servant, had access via official channels to the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, and the GNC of SA used this to good affect. For example, an executive committee meeting in January 1950 expressed the urgent need for the establishment of Good Neighbour committees in towns and suburbs adjacent to migrant reception and worker camps throughout Adelaide and South Australia. To this end, the executive requested that Edson officially approach the Mayor of Port Adelaide to discuss the formation of such a branch.<sup>50</sup> Edson reported at the following meeting of the executive committee that the Mayor had been receptive to the idea but would first like to discuss it with the town clerk and his councillors. Ultimately Edson reported that contact with the Mayor had not been particularly fruitful, and an approach was instead made to the Port Adelaide Women’s Services Organisation to facilitate the establishment of a committee in the area. Thus council members used their personal and professional contacts to establish ‘Good Neighbour’ networks of existing Australian community groups. The Port Adelaide example reminds us that by no means were all Australians receptive to assisting migrants. Still, an appreciation of the perseverance and adaptability of the GNC of SA affords us a better understanding of the processes underlying their ‘assimilationist’ activities.

Edson’s value to the council was further demonstrated in July 1951. At an executive committee meeting Pastor Zinnbauer of the UELCA raised the matter of issuing landing

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<sup>49</sup> Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours,’ 81, 84.

<sup>50</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/2. Good Neighbour Council of SA, Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 11 January 1950, 2. See also Minutes of Executive Council Meetings, Adelaide, 18 January 1950, 2; and 28 February 1950, 3.

permits to New Australians' relatives still residing in Europe. Zinnbauer reported from his daily dealings with migrants, across metropolitan Adelaide, that many New Australians were anxious over the fate of their parents and extended family members whom they had left in Europe, and who were not eligible for assisted passage to Australia. Edson, in his capacity as CMO and executive GNC committee member, responded at the meeting that such cases would be considered on their merits, and if the persons in question did not have certain illnesses like tuberculosis, then they would likely be granted landing permits to enter Australia.<sup>51</sup> Mr Edson encouraged Pastor Zinnbauer to persuade the migrants to make the appropriate submissions to the department for consideration.

Pastor Zinnbauer was very active through the GNC of SA during the 1950s, attending meetings as early as September 1949. He is perhaps an early example of close migrant involvement on the council. As we saw in Chapter Three, Zinnbauer arrived in Australia as a refugee from Nazism. Working as City and Migrant Missioner for the UELCA from 1945, Zinnbauer (and his wife) worked tirelessly amongst the migrant community. In the course of visiting migrant hostels and worker camps throughout South Australia, Zinnbauer had noted a distinct lack of amenities and service at the Mallala Holding Centre, 50 kilometers north of Adelaide. He brought this to the notice of the executive council in October 1950.<sup>52</sup> Executive member Edson was consulted, resulting in a visit to the Mallala area by Chairman Coombe and executive member Reverend Woollacott of the Catholic Church.<sup>53</sup> Coombe and Woollacott addressed a 'very comprehensive assembly of residents' in the town, after which it was reported back to the committee that 'a Good Neighbour Committee be formed' to better service the area.<sup>54</sup> Again the evidence reveals the representative nature of the GNC and its ability to inform the implementation of the government's assimilationist migrant settlement program. It further reveals the need for close examination of the day-to-day business of the GNM, as their coordinating and networking activities facilitated practical outcomes for migrants.

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<sup>51</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/2. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 13 July 1951, 2. As discussed in Chapters One and Four, landing permits required migrants to secure sponsors in Australia with guarantees of accommodation, employment and or financial support. These migrants were also responsible for meeting their own travel costs. See also Appendix 1.7 for further evidence and discussion of these provisions for migrants.

<sup>52</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 4 October 1950, 2.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 7 November 1950, 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 1-2.



The GNC of SA did not limit the usefulness of its representative membership to directly assisting migrants. In 1950 Edson was on hand to help the GNC of SA secure its first office premises in Adelaide. Through his position, which was responsible for vetting commonwealth assimilation funds at the state level, Edson acquired for the council new office furniture and renovation works through the Departments of Immigration and Works and Housing.<sup>55</sup> Thus the GNC of SA were well placed to use the skills, contacts and knowledge provided by Edson to the betterment of their work with migrants and the sustainability of their own organisation.

The presence of other influential representatives on the executive committee further strengthened the council's ability to achieve pragmatic goals. For over ten years, Colonel GH Fiddock of the South Australian Railways (SAR) was one such member. Fiddock's presence provided a link between the GNC and the many thousands of migrant and Australian railway workers dispersed throughout the state. Fiddock was primarily a migrant employment selection officer with the SAR, and had spent some time in Germany selecting Special Project German migrants for work on the railways. Back in South Australia he also coordinated migrant services and activities in regional areas such as Peterborough in the state's mid-north where large migrant workforces, some of whom he had selected himself, were stationed.<sup>56</sup> Fiddock's position on the executive committee gave him knowledge of, and better still, access to, state-wide organisations and voluntary bodies engaged in the assimilationist work of the GNM. For example, in September 1950 the executive council was contacted by the Peterborough branch of the GNC of SA requesting, among other things, financial assistance for the purchase of literature and stationary. The branch also sought advice from the executive committee on the provision of social events for the hundreds of young railway workers living in hostels just out of the town. Fiddock was asked by the committee to explore ways in which the SAR could assist in the provision of social functions for their workers.<sup>57</sup> Thus again we are presented with more evidence of the council's ability to initiate and coordinate individual and agency responses to the migrant situation.

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<sup>55</sup> NAA: A445/1, 112/3/5. Letter to Edson from Heyes, 25 October 1950; letter to Heyes from Edson, 2 November 1950; letter to Heyes from Edson, 8 November 1950; letter to Edson from Heyes, 13 November 1950.

<sup>56</sup> Colonel Fiddock had also spent time in Europe organising the selection of German Special Project workers for recruitment on the South Australian Railways in 1951. See NAA: A9306, 353/8, South Australian Railways - Migration [of German workers for].

<sup>57</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 20 September 1950, 1. The Peterborough branch of the GNC of SA also requested the patronage of the executive committee at an upcoming Masquerade Dance to be held at the Railway Institute. The request was granted by the executive committee.

In South Australia the GNC published a monthly newsletter distributed across the state, informing the general public of the activities of its various branches and related organisations. This addressed to some degree the assimilationist desire for widespread publicity amongst the Australian and migrant communities.<sup>58</sup> In its April 1953 issue, the GNC reported that a ‘Fifty-Fifty’ party had been held in Adelaide whereby a ‘crowd of 60 new and old Australians’ were treated to Australian and European dancing, music and supper. In Peterborough two similarly ‘successful’ functions had been organised by their branch: a social evening and a film evening attended by 17 and 50 migrants respectively.<sup>59</sup> As we will see through further examples the GNC continually sought to keep the activities of its city and regional branches in the public eye.

The GNC of SA newsletter reveals some of the advantages accruing from the council’s networking and coordinating role during the 1950s. In July 1953 the council reported to its readers that the South Australian division of the Red Cross Society had invited migrants of different nationalities to visit its headquarters for morning tea. They further informed readers of the value of working cooperatively:

Members of Red Cross country branches now visit migrants who are ill in hospital and notify the Good Neighbour Council branch secretary when patients are to return home. In this way home visits and sometimes after-care can be promptly arranged.

Readers also learned that the library of the Red Cross hoped ‘soon to have a large enough collection of foreign newspapers and magazines to lend to sick migrants. The sight of the familiar languages of home may well be an aid to convalescence’.<sup>60</sup> Similarly Pastor Zinnbauer kept the migrant experience in the public eye, reporting on the arrival of a group of German women and children to South Australia in late 1952. These migrants were on their way to family reunions, being dependents of the German SP workers whom we first met in Chapter Two. In an example of the cooperation between the GNC and agencies such as the Lutheran Churches, these Germans were greeted by UELCA Pastors Zinnbauer and Pachur and their congregational members as they passed through Adelaide on their way to being reunited with their husbands and fathers. Zinnbauer reported in the GNC of SA newsletter that

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<sup>58</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/1/1. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, Adelaide, 4 November 1949, 1. At this executive committee meeting in November 1949 a publicity sub-committee of the Council was formed to consider the growing need for publicity of the Council’s activities. The sub-committee included a representative from the Commonwealth Information Service.

<sup>59</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. *Good Neighbour Newsletter*, South Australia 5 (April, 1953), 2, 5.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, 9 (August, 1953), 5.

of these 189 dependents ‘twenty families disembarked at Pt. Augusta and were welcomed by members of the Good Neighbour Council’.<sup>61</sup> The work of the GNC, through its representatives and community group contacts, served to not only coordinate early migrant services, but also to keep that work in the public eye through the use of community publications. We saw this form of dissemination and publicity used to good affect amongst Lutheran congregations in Chapters Three and Four. The council’s newsletter reveals practical examples of grass roots assistance in the field of migrant settlement under the guise of assimilation. In this way the GNC of SA coordinated their approach to migrant assimilation during the 1950s, using all means at their disposal to meet the settlement needs of migrants in their areas. This was effected through the dissemination of specialist knowledge, experience on the ground dealing with migrant settlement problems, and the coordination of existing services within the community.

Active through its own publications, the GNC of SA also exploited further avenues for reaching their Australian and migrant audiences and communicating their growing experiences. Committee members channeled information through their workplaces. Mr R Grant, Treasurer of the GNC of SA, contributed an article titled ‘The Railway Family’ to the South Australian Railways Institute in 1953. In an attempt to encourage Australian railway workers to befriend their fellow migrant workers, Grant conveyed the migrants’ position:

In almost every suburban and country town, there are young men and women, some living in rooms and others in hostels, who do not enjoy the companionship of any member of their own family, but only that of a few acquaintances of the hostel or workshop....Theirs is a lonely life. Yet they belong to the ‘Railway Family’.

Grant reminded readers that while national groups and societies were doing all they could to assist these workers, the Railway Family could also help to make them feel welcome in Australia. Grant explained in the article how a simple invitation to dinner or to a club or association in the town could assist the migrant in forming attachments to Australia and help them to learn more of the English language. Above all it would help them to become better citizens. He concluded with a call to the Railway community: ‘let us try to be really “Good Neighbours” and help to make our Railway Family a really strong and happy Australian family’.<sup>62</sup> Support and assistance offered by the GNC in these ways helped to generate broader community interest and publicity around the government’s immigration and assimilation

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<sup>61</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. *Good Neighbour Newsletter*, South Australia 2 (January, 1953), 11.

<sup>62</sup> R Grant, ‘The Railway Family,’ *South Australian Railways Institute magazine*, February-March 1954.

programs. While Tavan and Jenkins have argued that this publicity was often self-congratulatory the evidence suggests that it was more than this. It would be naïve to conclude that the publicity generated by the GNC of SA countered the general indifference of Australians towards migrants, or that it improved services for migrants. But what these examples do reveal are grass roots attempts at raising awareness and encouraging widespread cooperation amongst the community, resulting in a fluid exchange of ideas and experiences between GNC members in metropolitan and regional South Australia.

There was no precedent for the work being undertaken by the GNM across Australia, just as there was no precedent for the government's postwar mass immigration and settlement program. Methods and objectives were identified in the early postwar years and there was general acknowledgement by both government and agency of the need for community engagement. Still, the venture was one large social experiment relying for the most part on the goodwill of untrained volunteers across Australia. After a decade of operation, as the GNC of SA took stock and braced itself for renewed efforts in the reformed field of migrant 'integration', it paused to reflect. In 1959 at the fifth State Conference of the Council, executive member Major General Sir Kingsley Norris considered that, 'when this Council first came together there was no precedent, no guidance, no plan as to how to go about it', but that in their wisdom:

Instead of saying, "We will start something new!" [it] realised that there are a lot of organisations who could help in this work and they should be brought together. They knew that if they could only co-ordinate instead of initiate they would get somewhere.<sup>63</sup>

The GNC of SA was by definition a coordinating body, bringing together government, departmental, agency and voluntary bodies alike in an effort to better meet the settlement needs of Australia's postwar migrants. The coordinating efforts of the council proved successful in initiating and influencing the development of migrant settlement services in South Australia at a grass roots level. While ultimately the GNM outgrew its usefulness as Australia shifted towards multiculturalism, in the immediate postwar years it gave agency to those committed to the settlement of migrants and thus the maintenance of social cohesion.

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<sup>63</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/21. Proceedings of the 5th State Conference in South Australia, 23-24 October 1959, Sir Kingsley Norris, guest speaker, 4.

This gives credence to Norris's observation ten years later that the great social experiment had largely succeeded.

The successes of the GNM are not easily measured in statistical terms. It is difficult to glean from the sources numbers of migrants helped on a day to day basis over this ten year period. And, arguably, this is irrelevant given what we know of the migrants' undeniably difficult experiences in postwar Australia. Yet the files of the GNC of SA reveal a number of member organisations and local branches that were very active amongst the migrant populations, important again because of what this evidence reveals of the process. Similarly the Council's headquarters in Pirie Street, Adelaide, offered much more than an administrative center for the coordination of regional South Australian branches. A regular weekly coffee lounge, conversation evenings with board games, cards, foreign language newspapers and magazines, and a migrant information service were all established at the Council's headquarters.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps tokenistic and irrelevant to the immediate needs of migrants and their inability to make use of existing Australian social spaces, these well meaning gestures on the part of the GNC of SA form part of a larger picture. They remind us that in carrying out the government's program of assimilation, the GNC of SA was afforded space to interpret policy and implement local initiatives that would best meet the settlement needs of migrants. If the driving force behind assimilation was the maintenance of social cohesion and harmonious social relations, then the easier the GNC made the transition for migrants, the better the outcomes would be for all Australians.

### **State conferences: a collaborative approach**

As we saw in Chapter Two, departmental social workers were integral to the provision of assistance to migrants in country areas. The GNM complemented this with their grass roots assistance largely located within the communities in which migrants were living. Regional GNC branch activities reveal more effectively the extent of the Council's coordinating role in South Australia. Regional work also reveals the difficulties encountered by the Council in establishing and coordinating a rural presence. The advent of state-based GNM conferences in 1953 helped to achieve coordination of these regional councils. These conferences provide a good example of the coordinating and organising efforts of the GNM in South Australia.

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<sup>64</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. 'New Australians Welcome! Good Neighbour Council Coffee Lounge and Information Bureau,' print pamphlet, 1-2.

Structured in many ways like the government's ACCs, state conferences brought together all manner of people working towards the assimilation of migrants. They were held annually in South Australia between 1953 until 1978 and included city, suburban, regional, commonwealth and state government representatives, as well as migrants themselves. The inaugural conference held in October 1953 was a chance for country branch delegates to meet each other, to network, and to discuss their common goals. The two-day conference exposed members to speakers ranging from government immigration officials, academics and experts, or quite simply migrants talking first hand about their settlement experiences. These structured gatherings facilitated an exchange of ideas, knowledge, questions and practices, and enabled council members and regional branches networking opportunities and access to officials whose help was often vital in rectifying migrant settlement issues.

At the Council's second conference Minister Holt reiterated the benefits of such a gathering of people in a message delivered by the State President:

It is of great value to the Good Neighbour movement for the representatives of your country branches to meet together as you are doing this week-end, to pool your experiences, to discuss special problems which you have encountered in your work, and to plan for the forthcoming year.<sup>65</sup>

The conference format included on the first day a keynote speaker talking on a topical issue, followed by question and answer type panel discussion on specific assimilation issues. The second day of the conference generally included further panel discussions, such as in 1954 when social worker Miss Lisle Johnson, from the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section, Mr W Schneider, from the Department's naturalisation section, Mr A Sansom, from the Department of Education's migrant education section, and Mr JT McKernan from the News and Information Bureau in Canberra, spoke on their particular areas.<sup>66</sup> There often followed regional branch summaries of work performed in the previous twelve months, and a conference summary and words of encouragement from the Organising Secretary, Miss Williams.

The inaugural State Conference of the GNC of SA, held in October 1953, invited regional branch delegates to give reports on the assimilation work they had undertaken in their

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<sup>65</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/21. Proceedings of the 2nd State Conference in South Australia, October 1954, Message from Minister Holt, 4.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, 4.

respective areas. Reports by Whyalla, Kalangadoo, Port Lincoln, Nuriootpa, Penola, Keith, Glenelg and Peterborough branch representatives told of personal and individual success stories with migrants in their towns. These included a Christmas party held at the Whyalla Institute Hall attended by 500 people, of whom 50 per cent were new Australians. Conference delegates also heard of the assistance given to a young Hungarian couple by way of clothes, furniture and food after their home burnt down in Kalangadoo in the state's south-east. Also in the south-east, the Penola branch spoke of fostering personal relationships with migrants in the area. In Port Lincoln, GNC branch members told of their regular hospital visits to sick migrants, and in Nuriootpa a further example of practical assistance was evidenced when the local branch gave financial assistance to a newly widowed migrant woman and her newborn baby to help with mortgage payments and legal fees. The assistance offered was broad ranging and pragmatically directed to meet the immediate settlement needs of migrants. However, as the Council's Secretary, Ms Williams, pointed out at the close of the conference, while these actions were to be commended, the branches needed to begin thinking more of their coordinating roles, especially as the numbers of migrant arrivals were increasing. There was only so much an individual branch member could do personally to assist migrants in their areas, and Miss Williams reminded the group that 'this conference has shown us that we are working as one wide movement and not as isolated little communities'.<sup>67</sup> Williams expressed the need for branches to work as organising councils and to:

begin to think of this work and your place in it as part of a Council, the Good Neighbour Council in your town, and your job is to look at the assimilation needs in your town. When you have found and analysed that need then set to and plan to organise to meet that need.<sup>68</sup>

Miss Williams continued with the example of the upcoming Royal Visit and how some branches had expressed their intent to 'bring the migrants in to the celebrations', but that it was not enough to do just that. She explained that branches needed to ensure that migrants understood firstly, that they were invited and secondly, why. She also observed that it would most likely be necessary for a Council representative to go to the Town Planning Committee and 'make definite plans for some special participation'. While attendance at the Royal Visit and ensuing celebrations of Australia's British heritage may have been irrelevant to the immediate needs of migrants, this example is important for what it reveals of the process and

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<sup>67</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/21. 1st State Conference in South Australia, 30-31 October 1953, Address of Miss Mary Williams, 67.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 66.

philosophy behind the GNC of SA. Miss Williams reiterated the fact that the Council existed to aid and assist all state branches, and if they, in turn, cooperated and communicated then so much more could be achieved in the rural communities. She concluded by also making explicit the government channels of communication that were open to all GN members through the executive committee:

If there is anything that can be done through our Good Neighbour Council here, through the Department of Immigration and its officers whom you have been able to meet at this conference, or through Canberra, we are ready to help.<sup>69</sup>

It is evident that the Council used its first State Conference to encourage the actions of state branches and to impress on them that a few citizens of goodwill could not achieve the long-term goals aspired to by the Council. If the GNM was to be effective it had to develop community networks capable of managing a sustained influx of migrants over a long period of time. As Williams stressed at the first state conference, the council had to work as one large coordinating body.

The third state conference of the GNC of SA was held at the University of Adelaide. President Winterbottom introduced the guest speaker, Sir Kerr Grant, Emeritus Professor of Physics, by remarking that apart from his great work in the sphere of physics, Grant was a 'loveable figure is South Australia' and that he was 'a very great humanitarian and particularly interested in the well-being of his fellow-men', qualities embodied by the GNM. And it was in his following address to delegates that Professor Grant succinctly articulated the issue of assimilation as one of settlement rather than the wholesale adoption of Australian culture. Grant said that:

If the new Australians, especially those of foreign origin, who do not speak our language, are to be assimilated within a reasonable time, by overcoming the difficulties of language, securing suitable employment and housing, and of becoming happy in this country where conditions may be strange to them, it is obvious that a very sustained effort is necessary, in which I think they require all the help and encouragement which they can receive from the old Australians.<sup>70</sup>

It is evident that 'overcoming of difficulties' was a primary goal of the GNC of SA and its member organisations during the 1950s. These settlement issues, as perceived by not only the GNC but other interested parties such as Professor Grant, were at the heart of the pragmatic

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<sup>69</sup> SLSA: SRG 703/21. 1st State Conference in South Australia, 30-31 October 1953, Address of Miss Mary Williams, 67.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, Proceedings of the 2nd State Conference in South Australia, 22-23 October 1954, Opening speech by Sir Kerr Grant, 6.



implementation of the Government's migrant assimilation policy. Without successful settlement there could be no assimilation; and without assimilation there could be no social cohesion.

In the interests of cooperation, the GNC continually notified Canberra of the formation of local South Australian branches and new appointments. Minister Holt dutifully sent a congratulatory letter to each new branch president throughout the entire decade. His letters were of simple thanks but closer reading reveals the importance of the assimilation program as seen by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Minister Holt himself. Holt used these letters of thanks to impress on the newly formed branches the vitally important national context of their work, ensuring that all affiliated with the GNC were given validity at the highest levels of government. On the formation of the Waikerie branch of the council, Holt wrote, 'I extend my warmest thanks for your practical contribution to the nationally important work of assisting our newcomers to become happy members of the Australian community'.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, on the formation of the Loxton branch Holt further emphasised his view, writing that:

The formation of every new branch is fresh evidence of the growing interest and good will of the Australian community towards the newcomers to this country and I should like to express my appreciation of the active contribution you are making to the nationally important task of migrant assimilation.<sup>72</sup>

Holt repeatedly heaped praise on the Australian community for their efforts towards the assimilation of migrants, and these letters form a succinct but powerful example of the gratitude felt by the Minister. On the formation of the Victor Harbour branch in 1953, Minister Holt wrote: 'the way in which public spirited citizens have come forward to assist newcomers to share fully in our community life is greatly acknowledged and I should like you to know that your personal efforts in this direction are indeed appreciated'.<sup>73</sup> Then, to the Mayor of Renmark on his appointment as President of the local branch, Holt wrote 'I am sure that as the result of the lead given by you in your capacity as Mayor, the citizens of Renmark will be inspired to play their part in this nationally important work of assimilation'.<sup>74</sup> Other such messages of congratulation, including one to the Salisbury branch in 1954, reveal a very proud

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<sup>71</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. Letter to Reverend Mattiske, President of GNC Waikerie branch, from Minister Holt, 15 October 1954.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*, letter to Mr Ellis, President of GNC Loxton branch, from Holt, 15 October 1954.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*, letter to Mrs Lloyd, President of GNC Victor Harbour branch, from Holt, 27 November 1953.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*, letter to Mr James, President of GNC branch and Mayor of Renmark, from Holt, 27 November 1953.

Holt, who boasted of over 100 branches functioning across Australia and how this had demonstrated ‘the growing goodwill of the Australian community towards newcomers’.<sup>75</sup> These words of praise and admiration were not only reserved for new branch presidents. When relinquishing his position as President of the executive committee of the GNC of SA in 1952, Mr Coombe received a congratulatory letter from Minister Holt. Holt wrote of his appreciation for Coombe’s work and his ‘personal contribution towards the success of the Commonwealth Government’s assimilation policy’, and, further, that he had been very impressed with the work of the South Australian GNC in particular. Holt continued:

As the principal pioneer of the Good Neighbour Movement in South Australia, this achievement must be a source of gratification to you and can be regarded as a fitting reward for the personal sacrifices you have undoubtedly made.<sup>76</sup>

On the appointment of Coombes’ successor, Mr Dudley Mathews, Holt wrote: ‘your personal interest in the Good Neighbour Movement in the past has been very much appreciated and it is gratifying to note that the leadership ... is to remain in capable and experienced hands’.<sup>77</sup> This volume of correspondence is demonstrative of Holt’s belief in the importance of the personal approach necessary for the GNC and affiliated member organisations involved in the field of migrant assimilation. The Minister for Immigration offered personal words of encouragement to this effect at every opportunity. Indeed, Holt’s very actions in addressing these letters personally impresses on the reader his conviction of the necessity for assimilation to be realised on the ground by well-meaning Australian citizens, ultimately a task for all Australians. This series of correspondence and the support shown by Minister Holt suggests a realistic and enthusiastic Departmental Head, a view that is at odds with the perceived orthodoxy and the top down methodology of the government’s dogmatic assimilationist approach.

## **Conclusion**

The GNC of SA may have started as a grand social experiment, but over the course of the next ten years it transformed itself into not only a useful, but also a vital, tool of the government’s postwar immigration program. In 1950 the principal objective of the Council had been to

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<sup>75</sup> NAA: A445, 112/3/5. Letter to Mrs Harvey, President of Salisbury GNC branch, from Holt, c.1954 [date illegible].

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*, letter to Mr Coombe, ex-President of GNC of SA, from Holt, 3 March 1952.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*, letter to Mr Dudley Mathews, President of GNC of SA, from Holt, 3 March 1952.

assist the settlement and assimilation of migrants into the Australian way of life. By 1960 this objective had grown to include the education of Australians to accept and welcome migrants, and the encouragement of a greater appreciation amongst all Australians of the privileges and benefits of Australian citizenship. By 1960 the GNC had reorganised itself into a well structured semi-professional coordinating body of both paid and voluntary members working towards the integration of migrants into Australian society. This apparent paradigm shift in the space of ten years is important for two reasons. Firstly, because it signified the realisation at a local level that it was inappropriate to expect migrants to 'assimilate' entirely into the existing culture, and secondly because it also revealed the broader assimilationist policy machinations that were taking place over that period of time. In essence what the evolution of the GNC reveals is a government policy, initiated and administered on a national level by the Department of Immigration, but interpreted, directed and implemented at a local level largely by individuals. Assimilation allowed agencies space within which to interpret, negotiate and implement policy at both the macro and micro levels. The resulting dialogue was reciprocal and served to inform the government's decisions relating to the needs of migrants as much as it did the GNM. Thus the relationship between the GNM and the government reveals not simply a monolithic policy enforced from a central bureaucratic point in Canberra, disseminated all the way down to the local community level (GNCs, community organisations, local public servants), but more accurately an informed and symbiotic adaptation of policy which was pragmatic, fluid, evolving and consultative. The policy of migrant assimilation, for all the rhetoric of the Menzies Government, was implemented on the ground by good natured and increasingly well informed Australian citizens committed to maintaining social cohesion in the face of mass immigration.

## Conclusion

It is commonly accepted that Australia's postwar immigration program and its related settlement policies were heavily managed by the Australian government, by and large through the newly established postwar Commonwealth Department of Immigration. Recent scholarship by Richards attributes Australia's relative success in maintaining social cohesion into the twenty-first century, after more than fifty years of large scale postwar immigration, in part to this management of change. Other studies argue that this management manifested itself as a bureaucratic and xenophobic advocacy of monoculturalism during the 1950s. Yet upon closer inspection a more complex story reveals itself, wherein the management of social change and the community's response to assimilation facilitated incremental shifts in immigration and settlement policy. Assimilationist rhetoric and the extreme difficulties and hardships faced by European migrants settling in postwar Australia, important as they are, can skew our understanding of what was happening at this crucial time. A simplistic reading of assimilation as the logical conclusion of government rhetoric obscures the development of a fluid and largely pragmatic approach to migrant settlement in 1950s Australia.

The postwar period of closely managed government intervention was underpinned by the implicit, and at times explicit, understanding that bureaucracy alone could not meet the needs of newly arrived migrants. To this end the Department of Immigration orchestrated a large scale social experiment wherein existing and newly created avenues of assistance, both government and community based, were brought together to ensure the success of the immigration program and the general public's acceptance of the sustained emigration of non-British migrants to Australia. This administratively sanctioned and managed settlement of migrants, which began as early as 1947 through the establishment of the Department of Immigration, contributes significantly to our understanding of Australia's assimilationist period. A continuous dialogue between bureaucracy and the community, facilitated through the Australian Citizenship Conventions, the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, bureaucrats, Good Neighbour Councils, agencies such as the Lutheran churches, and individual Australian citizens (and eventually migrants) served to validate this process and bring about subtle changes in attitude, practice and policy. By engaging public servants, agencies, and individual citizens in this process the government created a legitimate space

within which policy could be negotiated and implemented, at both official and community levels, largely according to need. In effect, this circular process, the interplay between policy, rhetoric and local need, necessitated compromise and resulted in incremental shifts in postwar immigration policy that better explain the genesis of more collaborative bureaucratic and community responses to the migrant presence through to the 1960s and 1970s.

We have seen through the establishment of the ACCs the manifestation of the Australian Government's desire to manage the reception and settlement of migrants in the community. Departmental actions also implicitly demonstrate a willingness by individual public servants to engage in broad community discussion with both agencies and individual citizens entrusted with the settlement of migrants into the Australian community. The highly orchestrated ACC gatherings are an example of this fluid conversation, drawing together academics, bureaucrats, experts in their fields, agencies, and committed individuals collectively to share their knowledge and experiences of working with migrants. Ultimately the department's early negotiation of the ACCs, and the direction of its CIAC advisory body, reveal the beginnings of this process of informed cooperation and communication. The Department of Immigration, through the ACCs and the CIAC, then, laid the foundations for what became an incrementally responsive and circular process of communication, knowledge sharing and identification of migrant and community needs. As we have seen, these foundations grew as the process increasingly allowed for personal agency in administering the assimilation and settlement of migrants at both the macro and micro levels.

The development of a social welfare section within the Department of Immigration, and that section's growing provision of services to migrants during the 1950s, is also demonstrative of the bureaucratic management of migrant assimilation. Social workers were uniquely placed as public servants to effect change while working on the ground with migrants within the Australian community. The Social Welfare Section fostered a process of social and administrative collaboration towards the assimilation and settlement of migrants, ultimately bringing about increased levels of understanding amongst the bureaucracy and the Australian community in general. The practical experiences of social workers dealing with day to day migrant settlement problems were disseminated nationally through the Department of Immigration, as well as at a community level, and by the end of the decade immigration and settlement policy increasingly reflected the difficulties inherent in the migration process and

its impact on the migrants' ability to settle 'successfully' into the Australian community. Staffing pressures and subsequent changes to the Section's ability to provide for the migrant population, by the early 1960s, perhaps accounts more accurately for the common perception of a lack of provision of postwar social welfare services for migrants. During the 1950s, departmental social workers not only provided services for migrants, but more importantly contributed to the collaboration of social and administrative processes that encouraged personal agency and a space within which to negotiate and interpret assimilationist policy according to local needs.

Building on this process of collaboration and communication was the empowerment of agencies to negotiate and implement policy at both the bureaucratic and community levels. The two Lutheran churches of Australia negotiated their place within the Australian community during the 1950s, utilising postwar immigration and the reception of European migrants, and especially German migrants, to do this. Both synods worked together to cater to the new migrant population, drawing on their existing administrative and community strengths to welcome migrants into their church community. As we saw, an emphasis on charitable duty and pastoral care were integral to the churches' early work amongst migrants. This pragmatic approach to postwar migrant reception by both churches contributes to our understanding of how assimilation policy was negotiated and interpreted at the local level. We saw, through the example of ethnic German refugees, an alternative to this process, where the channels of negotiation and communication broke down and the migrant journey towards settlement became significantly more difficult. Ultimately, however, the intricate negotiations of the churches' place within postwar Australian society, influenced to a large degree by the presence of European migrants within both the church and the wider community, brought about long lasting structural changes to the church itself. The Lutheran Church of Australia, then, is a grass roots example of how postwar immigration changed the nature of Australian society as opposed to imposing its assimilationist agenda of maintaining Australia's 'Britishness'.

Implicitly and, at times, explicitly interlaced with the Lutheran case study is the German migrant experience. With its unique set of circumstances including its recent enemy status, the assumed assimilability of its migrants, and the knowledge that these migrants were ready to invest themselves civically, economically and socially in their new society, the German

migrant example at times informs and at times illustrates the wider thesis. If we accept that while the rhetoric was of assimilation the practicalities of postwar immigration policy were more akin to a re-settlement policy, then we can reconceptualise the German stereotype along more pragmatic lines. As we saw earlier in the literature review, this pragmatic view of German migrants is already implicit in the secondary literature which references the practical settlement of the German migrant community as evidence of its assimilation (without presupposing the loss of any national and cultural affinities with Germany itself). Thus, the micro evidence of the German migrant experience, placed within the wider macro context of this thesis, validates the already implicit understanding of what postwar migrant assimilation was. That is, while the rhetoric was of total assimilation, Australian postwar immigration policy was rooted in pragmatism, settlement services and the maintenance of social cohesion.

Finally, the Good Neighbour Movement of Australia brings together all elements of the process in evidence throughout the thesis to demonstrate how social and administrative collaboration towards assimilation worked fluidly from both the top down and bottom up to better meet the needs of migrants. The activities of the GNC of SA in particular make evident the initially unforeseen consequences of the government's underlying principle of assimilationist policy, that it be negotiated and effected on the ground by enthusiastic and well-meaning Australian citizens. The GNC of SA and its individual members were afforded the agency to implement policy at a state and community level according to local need. While the rhetoric spoke of 'assimilating' migrants into the existing society, what was actually transpiring in these social and administrative spaces, created initially by the Department of Immigration but increasingly occupied by agencies such as the GNM, was the subtle negotiation of the 'what' and the 'how' of migrant assimilation. This distinction is important because it reveals a government, and a society, committed to social cohesion rather than to the dogmatic maintenance of a British monocultural society. Furthermore it advances our understanding of the period as not just one of top-down policy imposition, but a conversation at all levels which ultimately allowed for incremental changes to both policy and practise, a conversation which in turn modified the rhetoric as the decade came to a close.

While the Australian Government and immigration bureaucracy were the driving force behind postwar immigration and its related policies, it was the actions of individual men and women, as well as agencies, that played a crucial role in its success or failure. The historical

importance of the agency given to professional public servants and committed Australian citizens in shaping and managing the political, social and cultural changes of postwar Australia is not often acknowledged. A concentration on the top down approach by historians and sociologists, highlighting the government's hard-line assimilationist approach and the subsequent disempowerment of the migrant population, as important as this may be, obscures the nuanced realities of the period. The men and women who impacted so crucially on the development and implementation of migrant assimilation and settlement policies throughout the 1950s included Harold Holt, Tasman Heyes, Hazel Dobson, JT Massey, Roger Armstrong, GAM Edson, WD Borrie, right down to individual social workers such as Graeme Hunter, GT Cuddihy, Miss Johnson, and other dedicated individuals such as Coombe, Goyder, and Pastors Zinnbauer, Stolz and Muetzelfeldt. To varying degrees these men and women were architects of, and participants in, the pragmatic and informative dialogue that developed as a result of the social and administrative collaboration fostered under the guise of assimilation. This process incorporated the voices of bureaucracy, agency and grass roots community, if not directly migrants, during the 1950s. It was under these circumstances and the direction of the aforementioned individuals that the assimilation program was executed with bureaucratic efficiency, community good will and social cohesion. As we have seen, the unintended consequence of this process was the incremental attitudinal and policy shifts of the 1950s which better explain the genesis of emerging recognition for the migrant voice to be heard by the 1960s and 1970s. Ultimately then, postwar immigration worked and, in practice, migrant assimilation laid the foundations for a direct relationship between bureaucracy and the migrant community, becoming, as it were, an embryonic multiculturalism.



## Appendices

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**Discussion Paper****Postwar migration trends: A demographic snapshot of the South Australian German migrant community****1.1 Introduction**

There are traditionally two ways of looking at immigration studies – qualitatively or quantitatively, historically or demographically. In the literature there is not much by way of example regarding the marriage of big picture analysis and demographic micro study. For this reason, throughout the writing of the thesis it has been a constant tussle to marry the two approaches, especially considering the already multi-layered macro and micro approach brought to bear on the argument. This discussion paper combines the two approaches to immigration studies, and while the thesis employs a qualitative historical methodology, it is supported in this Appendix by a demographic approach to the sources. The micro study here does two things: it supports our analysis of the bigger picture by providing hard evidence of the demographic trends of the migrants in question, while simultaneously reinforcing the thesis’s methodological approach by demonstrating again how knowledge of the particular can contribute to our understanding of the general. This demographic study sits as an Appendix to the thesis, sometimes supporting the broader argument, at other times simply presenting hard evidence of the German migrants that largely form the subject of Part Two of the thesis.

In light of what we have learnt in the thesis about the processes and relationships forming around the government’s policy of migrant settlement and assimilation during this time, it is useful to gain a general understanding of the German migrant community between 1945 and 1965. If we recall the literature review at the beginning of the thesis, there exist various targeted studies which shed some light on aspects of the German postwar migrant community in Australia. Still, we do not know a great deal about the community as a whole. This discussion paper, then, drawing on my compiled migrant database (herein referred to as the ‘Migrant Database’) of 2,216 German arrivals to South Australia, is a micro study providing solid empirical underpinnings for further analysis of the German migrant experience as it pertains to this thesis. Broadly the discussion will address trends of migration, birthplace, nationality, gender and age composition, marital status, family structure, settlement preferences, and length of stay. This will enable us to draw conclusions about what we know of the migrant experience and lay the groundwork for the

still deeper analysis of the German case study situated within Chapters Three and Four of the thesis.

## 1.2 The sources

The Migrant Database draws on nineteen archival boxes held at the National Archives of Australia's Adelaide office. These boxes house the 'Alien Registration Documents' of German migrant arrivals in South Australia between the years 1945 to 1965.<sup>1</sup> In all, there were 2,216 individual German migrant files located in these boxes.<sup>2</sup> These documents form part of series D4878, described by the Archives as containing 'applications for registration of aliens in Australia, under the National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations'.<sup>3</sup> The database is modelled on the Commonwealth Department of Immigration registration form, known as an RA2.<sup>4</sup> Every migrant entering Australia was required to complete an RA2 form, which recorded information such as name, date of birth, place of birth, nationality, gender, marital status, occupation, hair and eye colour, visa number, passport number, and present address. This information forms the basis of the Migrant Database. Other relevant documents were attached to migrants' individual RA2 files including photographs, marital certificates, employment details, and any subsequent changes of address. This information was tracked by the Department of Immigration as a requirement of the Aliens Act of 1947.<sup>5</sup> Series D4878 consists of five consignments. Only some of these are accessible to researchers at item level on the National Archives of Australia Record Search database.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These Alien Registration Documents were original RA2 migrant arrival forms, and not the condensed 'card' versions that came later. They are from Consignment 3 of Series D4878. The consignment was arranged by nationality for the purposes of the Department of Immigration and then batched up and forwarded to the National Archives of Australia in the corresponding state. See Appendix 4.1 for example of the RA2 form.

<sup>2</sup> NAA: D4878, Alien Registration Documents; Consignment 3: Nationality, German; 19 boxes. At the time of data collection, in 2002, none of these files had been entered into the National Archives searchable database Record Search, and were only discovered after conversations with archivists in the Adelaide office.

<sup>3</sup> The form, known as an RA2 contains 'all personal particulars including: full name, date and place of birth, nationality, sex, marital status, photograph, fingerprints, present address, trade (if any), etc. The forms are attached to a backing sheet together with any other relevant documents such as police reports, changes of abode, etc. Most of the records are arranged alphabetically. Others are arranged by nationality then alphabetically'. NAA: D4878, Alien Registration Documents; Series Notes.

<sup>4</sup> For ease of access, the Department of Immigration consolidated this information onto the better known Alien Registration Cards, also held by the National Archives of Australia. See NAA: D4881, Alien Registration Cards, alphabetical series, 1946-1976.

<sup>5</sup> The Aliens Act 1947 required all 'aliens', or non-British subjects, to report any changes to their address, employment, marital status and personal situation to the Department of Immigration. See: Michael Klapdor, Moira Coombs, Catherine Bohm, *Australian Citizenship: A chronology of major developments in policy and law* (Canberra: Department of Parliamentary Services, September 2009), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Consignment 1: a series of RA2 forms arranged alphabetically by surname. Consignment 2: a series of RA2 forms arranged alphabetically by surname of migrants who had died or left the country (i.e. inactive files). Consignment 3: a series of RA2 forms arranged by nationality. Consignment 4: a series of RA2 forms with migrant surnames starting with the letter 'P'. Consignment 5: a series of RA2 forms compiled by the National Archives of Australia as they come across RA2 forms lodged in other files and series. Consignments 1 and 2 form the largest component of the 73.71 metres held in the Adelaide office. Based on discussions with Enid Woodley, Assistant Director of Access and Communication, in early 2010 in the

The nineteen boxes of German migrant applications from Consignment 3 form the basis of this discussion paper. The Department of Immigration lodged series D4878 with the National Archives of Australia as part of its disbandment in 1974.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is important to note that my sample of 2,216 German migrants were resident in South Australia and registered with the Department of Immigration, as per the Aliens Act, at 12 June 1974.

The Migrant Database sample of 2,261 individuals represents 14.9 per cent of the total German born intake to South Australia, and 2 per cent of the national intake, during the period 1947 to 1961.<sup>8</sup> This sample enables observations on the size, nature and demographic structure of the post-1945 German migrant community. Inferences derived from the sample data are validated against existing knowledge of the German migrant community, and more generally against the Commonwealth Government's postwar immigration program. What this micro study reveals is that German migrants were typical of the postwar migrant demographic and were therefore similarly subject to the social and political forces we see operating at the government, departmental, and agency levels throughout the thesis.

### 1.3 German migration schemes

As we saw in the thesis, the general historiography of Australia's postwar immigration program is comprehensive. The German migrant experience, however, is less well documented and almost exclusively centres on the West German Assisted Passage Scheme. While this migration agreement supplied the vast majority of German migrants to Australia, a handful of lesser known schemes were also in operation. Table 1 below outlines the schemes briefly. The Migrant Database offers new insight into the

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Adelaide office, all of Consignment 1, and some of Consignments 2 and 3, have been added to the Archives' online 'Record Search' at item level (meaning at migrant RA2 form level). This means their existence is discoverable at Record Search level.

<sup>7</sup> The original Department of Immigration was dismantled and abolished on 12 June 1974 under the Whitlam Labour Government. Its various functions, such as welfare, education and publicity, were divided amongst existing Departments. The Department of Labour became responsible for general immigration matters, and was renamed the Department of Labour and Immigration. From 1975, under the Fraser administration it was again renamed, becoming the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. See: Ann-Marie Jordens, *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia, 1945-1975* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1997), 238-241; Brian Murphy, *The Other Australia: Experiences of migration* (Sydney: Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> In 1947 there were 1098 German born residents living in South Australia and by 1961 there were 16,007 such residents living in South Australia. Therefore the net intake between 1947 and 1961 was 14,909 German born migrants to South Australia. The database represents 2,216 of these migrants, or 14.9 per cent. For the intake of German born migrants to Australia as a whole during this time period, my database is representative of just over 2 per cent of the entire German born population in Australia. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1947 and 1961 Census data.

demographic nature of these schemes and is a useful first step in analysing Australia's postwar German migrant community.

**Table 1**  
**German immigration schemes, 1945-1965<sup>9</sup>**

Migration scheme	Years of operation	Details of recruitment
Displaced Persons (DP)*	1947 – 1952/1954	Some German-born migrants entered Australia under this refugee scheme.
Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM)*	1952	There was provision for 1000 skilled German workers to enter Australia under this visa scheme.
Employment of Scientific and Technical Enemy Aliens (ESTE A)*	1949 – 1952	Approximately 145 German scientists and engineers were recruited and emigrated to Australia under this scheme.
Special Projects (SP)*	1951 – 1953	Approximately 77,000 migrants entered Australia under this scheme including German tradesmen as well as Dutch, French, Austrian and Italian migrants.
German Assisted Passage (GAPS)*	1952 – 1965	Over 100,000 assisted German migrants entered Australia under this scheme.
Full Fare (FF)*	1952 onwards	Unassisted, landing permit sponsored migrants
Migrant Visa (MV)*	1952 onwards	Unassisted, landing permit sponsored migrants

\* These abbreviated terms are used to identify the respective migration schemes in all graphs and tables derived from the Migrant Database within this chapter.

While 1952 saw the beginning of postwar German migration on a large scale, small numbers of Germans did arrive in South Australia from 1949 under the Displaced Persons and Full Fare migration schemes. It is not until the beginning of the Special Projects scheme in 1951 that there is any change to the situation. In 1951 and 1952, the Special Projects scheme contributed over 80 per cent of German migration to South Australia.

<sup>9</sup> See Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, 10, 12-13; Jean Martin, *Refugee Settlers: A Study of Displaced Persons in Australia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1965), 92; Lynne Carmichael, 'Past and Present German Migration. A comparison of two major periods of German migration to South Australia (1836-1900 and 1947-1971) with special reference to secondary school age children of German migrants,' Advanced Diploma of Teaching, Torrens College of Advanced Education, 1972, 114; Uta von Homeyer, 'The Employment of Scientific and Technical Enemy Aliens (ESTE A) Scheme in Australia: A reparation for World War II?', *Prometheus* 12 n.1 (June, 1994), 77; Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008), 217. The Migrant Database also records a small number of Tourist Visas (TV) which appear in some Figures throughout the chapter.

However, from 1953 onwards the Special Project and Displaced Persons schemes ceased altogether. This reflects a clear refocusing of German migration towards the new bilateral agreement with the West German government in 1952. The Migrant Database mirrors what we know of this assisted passage scheme, that it supplied the greatest proportion of German migrants to South Australia between 1953 and 1965.<sup>10</sup> This was supplemented each year by small numbers of full fare paying migrants. While small numbers of German migrants settled in South Australia after 1947 with the Displaced Persons scheme, the introduction of an assisted passage agreement in 1952 resulted in the largest net gains for the new German community.<sup>11</sup>

The Migrant Database suggests that 76 per cent of all German arrivals to South Australia were under the assisted passage scheme.<sup>12</sup> The next largest arrival group was those who received no financial assistance from the Australian Government, generally because they did not meet the requirements for assisted passage. These migrants, coming under Migrant and Full Fare visa schemes, accounted for 14 per cent of total German arrivals in the Migrant Database between 1949 and 1965. The last significant group was the Special Project migrants who, arriving in the short space of three years, made up a relatively small 8 per cent of the overall German sample. We saw in Chapter Two of the thesis just how disadvantaged this group was in terms of their work contracts and social isolation. The Special Project migrant demographics reveal to a greater extent this group's disadvantaged place within the overall postwar immigration program.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, South Australia's postwar German migrant community largely comprised assisted migrants, with numerically smaller, but demographically significant, numbers of

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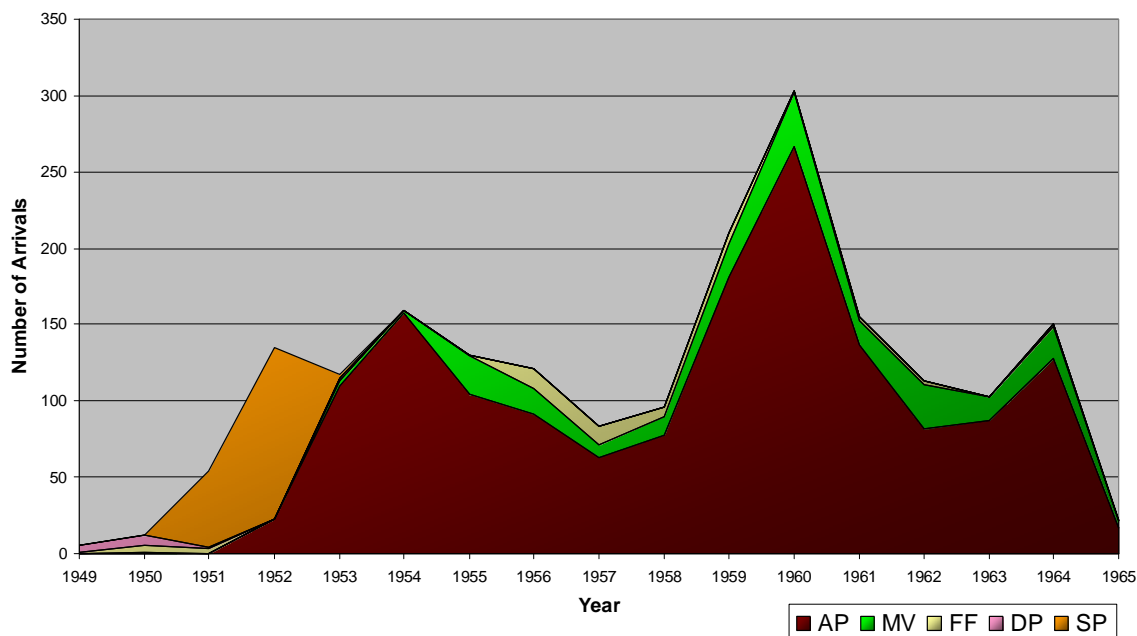
<sup>10</sup> Between 1951 and 1962, 84 per cent of all German born arrivals in Australia were assisted migrants. Statistics Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, *Immigration: Federation to century's end. 1901-2000* (Canberra: Department of Immigration, October, 2001) 42; See also Figure 9, Appendix 1.11.

<sup>11</sup> See: Gisela Kaplan, 'Australian Public Opinion of Germans and Germany in the Australian Print Media 1945-1956', in *German- Australian Cultural Relations Since 1945: Proceedings of the conference held at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, from September 20-23, 1994*. ed. Manfred Jurgensen (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), 498; Jürgen Tampke and Colin Doxford, *Australia Willkommen: A history of the Germans in Australia* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1990), 248; Carmichael, 'Past and Present Migration,' 107, Ingrid KR Muenstermann, 'German Immigrants in South Australia after 1945,' PhD thesis, Flinders University, 1997, 58, 76-78; Gisela Kaplan, 'Post-war German immigration', in James Jupp, ed. *The Australian People: An encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 498

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 1.12, Figure 10.

<sup>13</sup> The rapid and concentrated nature of this scheme is highlighted when the 8 per cent over 3 years is compared with Migrant Visa and Full Fare migrants who constituted 14 per cent of all arrivals over a 16 year period. Source: Migrant Database.

specifically recruited or sponsored migrants.<sup>14</sup> As we saw in Parts One and Two of the thesis, the demographic nature of early German arrivals presented the Australian community with a specific set of problems in receiving and catering to these migrants.



**Figure 1**  
**German migrant arrivals to South Australia by scheme, 1949-1965**  
 Source: Migrant Database

#### 1.4 Nationality and birthplace

Anomalies in Australian Census data make it difficult to determine the true numerical count of German migrants entering Australia during the postwar period. For this reason alone the Migrant Database is an important step in determining the true nature of postwar German migration to Australia. During the decade 1949 to 1959, Australian Bureau of Statistics census data records ‘country of last residence’ as opposed to country of birth. Given Europe’s postwar refugee problem and the mass movements of populations before and after 1945, there is no logical link between country of last residence and country of birth, or in fact nationality. Census data alone, then, is not a reliable indicator of Australia’s German migrant population during these years.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, this study draws information about Australia’s German migrant community from the 1947 and 1961 census

<sup>14</sup> This will become further apparent later in the study when gender and age structure is addressed.

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Section, *Federation to century’s end*, 55; see also Muenstermann, ‘German immigrants,’ 59-70; and Carmichael, ‘Past and Present Migration,’ 105-106 for further discussion of the statistical limitations of ABS census data between 1949-1959 for the German migrant community.

years, from which country of birth data is available. In 1947, Australia's German born population was at an all time low, being 14,567, or 2 per cent of the non-Australian born population. By 1961, after more than a decade of postwar German migration, this population had risen to 109,315, or 6.1 per cent of the non-Australian born population.<sup>16</sup> The South Australian figures were 1,098 and 16,007 respectively.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, then, the consequence of Australia's immigration program for the German migrant community was a reinvigoration of its numbers in the postwar period after a steady decline up to and including the Second World War.<sup>18</sup>

While we have reliable census data from 1961 onwards it is particularly important, in light of the status of many German nationals after the fall of the Third Reich in 1945, to establish the nationality of Australia's immediate postwar German migrant community. As well as German-born citizens living outside of Germany's pre-war borders, displaced ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe were forced into the already crowded borders of allied occupied Germany. Between 1945 and 1949 over seven million German refugee and expellee arrivals had been registered in Western allied occupied Europe.<sup>19</sup> By 1950 there were some 7.8 million *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* expellees resident in West Germany alone.<sup>20</sup> We saw in Chapter Four of the thesis a case study of a particular group of ethnic German refugees sponsored and settled in Australia by UELCA (one of two mid-twentieth century branches of Lutheranism in Australia). In an attempt to gauge the impact of the ethnic German refugee problem on broader German emigration to Australia the Migrant Database analyses four fields collected on the RA2 Form: nationality, previous

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<sup>16</sup> Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 17-19.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947 and 1961. Census Bulletin no. 12, *Summary for the State of South Australia* (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1947), 7; Census Bulletin no. 11, *Summary for the State of South Australia* (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1961), 6; see also Muenstermann, 'German immigrants' for a comprehensive breakdown of ABS Census data for the German migrant community.

<sup>18</sup> In 1947, Australia's German born population was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the top ten 'country of birth' statistics. By 1961 this population had moved into 3<sup>rd</sup> place behind the United Kingdom and Italy. See: Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 21. The steady decline in the German-born population until 1947 was symptomatic of a wider lull in the foreign-born population which had, in 1947 for the first time since European settlement began, dropped to below a tenth of the entire population: Graeme Hugo, 'A New Paradigm of International Migration between the European Union and Australia: patterns and implications,' conference paper (18-20 February, 2003), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Julius Isaac, 'Problems of Cultural Assimilation Arising from Population Transfers in Western Germany', *Population Studies* 3, Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants: Supplement (March, 1950), 24. See also Chapter Four of the thesis for further discussion of the *Volksdeutsche* in Australia.

<sup>20</sup> Dr Hilde Waner, 'Die Bedeutung der Auswanderung für die Lösung europäischer Flüchtlings und Bevölkerungsprobleme', *Kieler Studien, Forschungsberichte des Instituts für Weltwirtschaft an der Universität Kiel*, No.15 (Kiel: Institut für Weltwirtschaft an der Universität Kiel, 1951), Table 1.



nationality, and town and country of birth.<sup>21</sup> I collected these fields in an attempt to determine whether significant numbers of *Volksdeutsche* arrived in Australia under the German Assisted Passage scheme, or whether the majority of these migrants were German nationals who had lived within Germany's pre-1933 borders.<sup>22</sup>

The Migrant Database records that 90 per cent of the sample group were born in Germany. The remaining 10 per cent, or 219 people, were born elsewhere (refer to Table 2). Of these 219 people, 169, or 77 per cent, stated on entry to Australia that their nationality was German. A further thirty-eight people, or 17 per cent, stated that they were of German nationality but had previously held the nationality of their birth country. Six migrants recorded that they were of German nationality but had previously been stateless, and a further six recorded that they retained the nationality of their birth (other than German)\*.<sup>23</sup> The largest numbers of non-German born migrants of German nationality came from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, and the Free City of Danzig.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 2**  
***Birthplace Other than Germany***

<b>Previous nationality</b>	<b>Nationality</b>			
	<b>German</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Previously stateless</b>	<b>Total</b>
Poland	35	5	4	44
Yugoslavia	23	13	0	36
Danzig (Free State)	18	1	1	20
Czechoslovakia	19	1	0	20
Romania	15	2	0	17
Hungary	13	3	0	16
Other	46	13	1	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>213</b>

\*The remaining six migrants have been omitted given they were likely erroneously stored in the German index at the National Archives Office Adelaide.

**Source: Migrant Database**

<sup>21</sup> The migrant's nationality was recorded from their Passport while any previous nationality (likely citizenship) was declared by the migrant themselves. The RA2 Form also recorded the home town and country of birth.

<sup>22</sup> As we saw in Chapter Four of the thesis ethnic German refugees faced a peculiar set of challenges in emigrating to and settling in Australia

<sup>23</sup> Discussions with Enid Woodley at the National Archives' Adelaide office confirmed that these six records were most likely erroneously stored in the German nationality boxes and likely belonged in another nationality grouping under Consignment 3 of Series D4878.

<sup>24</sup> Significant numbers of ethnic Germans were expelled from these countries after 1945.

A small proportion of those born outside Germany but being of German nationality were children. There are two possible explanations for this. Firstly, that they were born to German nationals who resided in, or were relocated to, occupied territories during the Second World War. Or secondly, that they were *Volksdeutsche* living outside of Germany's pre-war borders but were incorporated into the Reich after 1939.<sup>25</sup> It becomes evident, then, that regardless of whether migrants were German born nationals or ethnic German expellees, their wartime and postwar experiences were likely to have brought some degree of dislocation.

Another factor in determining the nationality of Australia's postwar German community is marital status. Any number of these 219 (woman) migrants could have obtained their German nationality through marriage. The database shows that 41 per cent of these migrants were female and that over half of them were married at the time of arrival in Australia. A further 11 per cent of the women were single, 3 per cent widowed and 1 per cent divorced. So at least 29 per cent of the 219 migrants, counting widowed and divorced migrants, were born outside Germany and had possibly acquired citizenship through marriage; thus we can not necessarily conclude that they were *Volksdeutsche*. Between 70 and 100% of the 219 migrants may have been *Volksdeutsche*. While this sounds significant in the context of non-German born migrants, it becomes less so when considered in terms of the total number of German arrivals recorded in the Migrant Database. Based on the sample data this reduces the South Australian *Volksdeutsche* percentage to somewhere between 6.9 and 10 per cent of our overall sample, therefore of a similar magnitude to the Special Project migrant arrivals. However, owing to a lack of reliable figures, it can only be hypothesised that the *Volksdeutsche* population coming to South Australia was relatively small. The sample data relates only to those migrants declared as having German nationality on arrival in Australia. There is evidence, documentary and anecdotal, to suggest that some *Volksdeutsche* entered Australia as nationals of their birth country after 1945.<sup>26</sup> It is impossible, given the scope of this study, to determine accurate numbers of the total post-1945 *Volksdeutsche* migration to South Australia, but ultimately the sample data indicates that the overwhelming majority of arrivals were German-born nationals rather than *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>27</sup> Small numbers of declared *Volksdeutsche* did migrate to Australia,

<sup>25</sup> Chauncy Harris, Gabriele Wulker, 'The Refugee Problem of Germany,' *Economic Geography* 29 n.1 (January, 1953), 13.

<sup>26</sup> See: Mark Aarons, *War Criminals Welcome: Australia a sanctuary for fugitive war criminals since 1945*, (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2001); Kaplan, 'Post-war German immigration,' 498.

<sup>27</sup> Chapter Four does address the *Volksdeutsche* issue within the limited scope of an Australian Lutheran case study.

but as we saw in Chapter Four of the thesis, in South Australia at least, their entry was difficult and their experiences far removed from those who came as assisted migrants.

### 1.5 Gender ratios

The gender composition of South Australia's postwar German migrant community is largely as we would expect it to be. Australian census data reveals that in 1947 the ratio was 160 male for every 100 female German-born migrants in Australia. This disparity was eroded by the government's managed postwar assisted passage migration scheme. By 1961 the gender ratio of Australia's German-born population was 111:100.<sup>28</sup> Given the predominance of assisted passage migrants amongst South Australia's postwar German born population, it is reasonable to expect the sample data to reflect this ratio. Indeed, the sample data clearly indicates this, recording even percentages of male and female assisted passage migrant arrivals.<sup>29</sup> The Migrant Database records a marked gender disparity amongst the sample group in the early years which gives way to a relatively consistent pattern of male and female migration by the mid 1950s.<sup>30</sup> The sample data suggests a steady rise and subsequent peak in male arrivals between 1950 and 1952, while female arrivals for the same period show a decline followed by a steady rise until 1953.<sup>31</sup>

The potential of the government's mass immigration program to create a gender imbalance in Australia did not go unnoticed. During the 1950s the Federal Department of Immigration increasingly spoke of the 'unbalance of the sexes'. Primarily this related to postwar Italian and Greek migration.<sup>32</sup> In the case of German migrants, the government actively sought to manage the gender balance through its bilateral agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1951, following talks with German Government officials to secure a migration agreement, the Chief Australian Migration Officer in Cologne wrote to Secretary Heyes that:

So far as the proportion of men to women is concerned...It is unlikely that we could expect more than 10,000 women in the first years which would leave about 15,000 men.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 29.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 1.16-1.18, Figures 14-16.

<sup>30</sup> Between 1950 and 1952 the male to female gender ratio for all German arrivals is 390:100; while for the period 1953 to 1961 the ratio is 117:100. Source: Migrant Database.

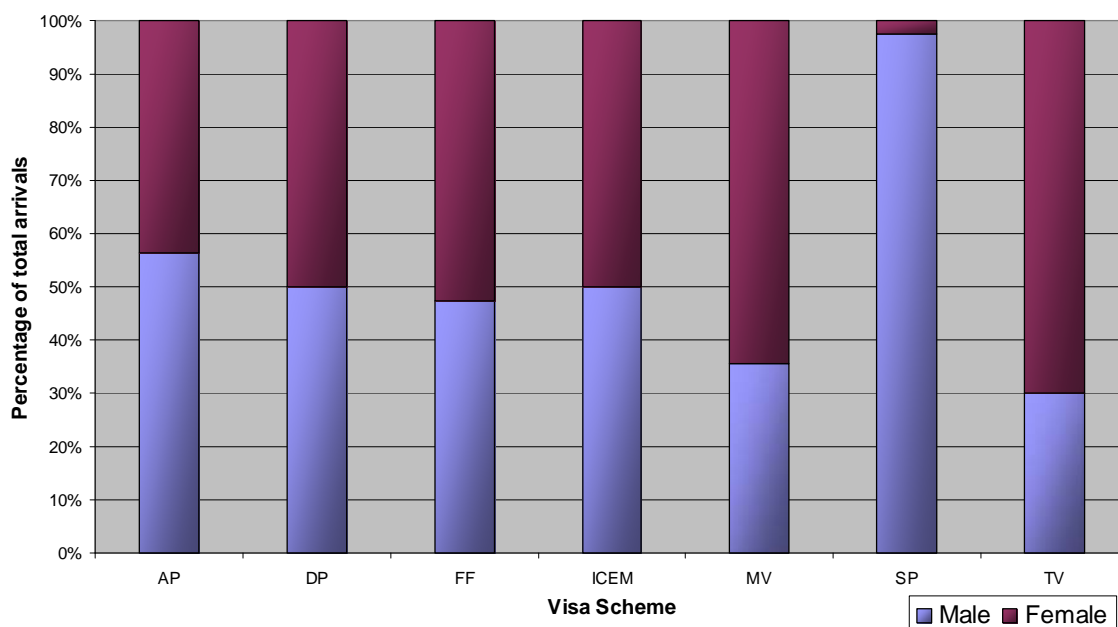
<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 1.15, Figure 13.

<sup>32</sup> John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: Private sentiment and political culture in Menzies' Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2000).

<sup>33</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/4107, Recruitment of German women for work with Public Utilities, 1951 – 1952. 4 page letter from Greenhalg to Heyes c.1951, 4.

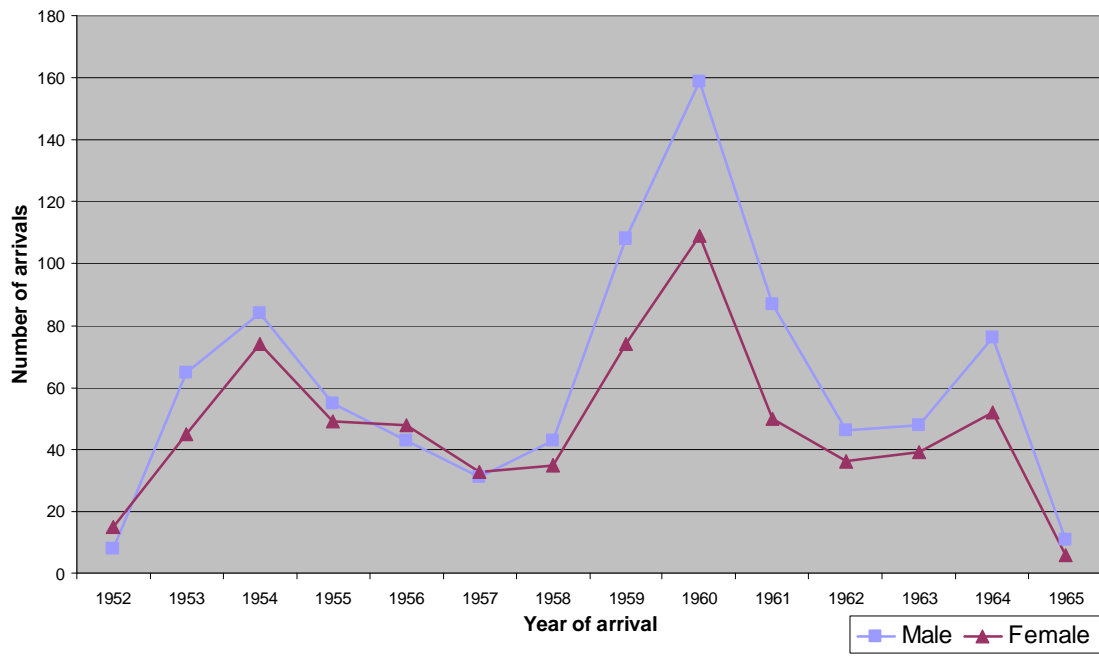
Through their migration officers in Europe, the Department of Immigration continued to monitor male to female ratios for the life of the assisted passage agreement. This is reflected in the census and sample data.

In the example of German migration, the variety of postwar schemes account for early fluctuations in gender ratio. The sample data reveals that combined Full Fare and Migrant Visa arrivals from 1950 to 1965 show an erratic trend, accentuated by the relatively small scale of its scheme and numbers. The male and female trends bear scant relation to each other and there is a noticeable dominance of women from 1954 onwards. The Migrant Database further reveals that of all Special Project migrant arrivals, 98 per cent were male, or 160 of 164 migrants as shown in Figure 2 below. It must be remembered, though, that these Special Project workers accounted for 14 per cent of all German male arrivals in the period under review. The sample data further suggests that the high ratio of men to women here had only a minor effect on the overall gender balance of the German migrant community. These small deviations in the Full Fare, Migrant Visa and Special Project gender ratios are reflective of the specific criteria of these schemes and we saw in Chapter Two of the thesis, through the example of isolated Special Project workers, how even these small disparities could severely disadvantage the migrants in question. Still, the great majority of postwar German migration transpired under the more controlled environment of the bilateral agreement and under the watchful eye of the Department of Immigration and the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee (CIAC), resulting in relatively stable gender ratios throughout the postwar years.



**Figure 2**  
**German Migrant visa arrivals to South Australia, 1949-1965**  
**Source: Migrant Database**

The Migrant Database suggests that the government succeeded in maintaining a gender balance amongst the postwar German migrant community. As well as almost reaching parity, the data reveals the German assisted passage scheme maintained a consistent gender ratio throughout the 1950s. Figure 3 below gives visual confirmation of this, showing that male and female trends correlated closely throughout the 1950s. While the ratio was close to 1:1, the sample group suggests there were consistently more male than female arrivals to South Australia each year. The large numbers of assisted passage migrants magnified this small difference in ratio, thus resulting in a slight gender imbalance within the German migrant community. The magnitude of this imbalance was less pronounced than for some other migrant groups, as shown in Table 3 and thus it could be concluded that the government did succeed in managing the gender balance of its postwar German assisted passage scheme.



**Figure 3**  
**German Assisted Passage arrivals to South Australia by gender, 1952-1965**  
**Source: Migrant Database**

**Table 3**  
**Gender ratios by country of birth, 1947-1961\*<sup>34</sup>**

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Overall, the data reflects the gender imbalance inherent in the Australian Government's early postwar German immigration schemes targeted at specific workers in specific industries.<sup>35</sup> This predominantly male population gave way to a more balanced gender ratio with the establishment of the West German Assisted Passage Scheme in late 1952. The intake of more women and families from 1953 ended this disparity, but did not redress it. Furthermore, the sample data illustrates that, irrespective of scheme, between 1949 and 1965 the gender ratio of German arrivals to South Australia remained close to 127:100.<sup>36</sup> Thus, while Australia's, and specifically South Australia's, German migrant populations grew significantly after 1949, they did so while maintaining a stable gender ratio. Perhaps then, as assisted migrants arrived in greater numbers the postwar German migrant community experienced less of the isolation that was observed amongst the earlier Special Project workers.

### 1.6 Age structure

A discussion on the age structure of the South Australian German migrant community sheds light on the community's capacity to transition and settle more easily into Australian society. The Migrant Database indicates that Germans aged between twenty and thirty years dominated the sample group. This is consistent with national census figures that show twenty-seven as the median age of German-born migrants in 1961.<sup>37</sup> The sample data, supported by the census figures, suggests a postwar German migrant community comparatively younger than its British and Italian counterparts, but on par with the Dutch

<sup>34</sup> Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 29.

<sup>35</sup> This disparity was not only noted by the Department of Immigration. As we saw in Chapter Two, departmental social workers identified these men as needing specific attention and assistance, as did both synods of the Lutheran Church of Australia. The Lutheran Churches' efforts in this regard is discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>36</sup> Male and female arrivals total 56 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. See Appendix 1.17, Figure 15.

<sup>37</sup> Statistics Section, *Federation to century's end*, 31.

and Australian-born populations.<sup>38</sup> Evidence from the Department of Immigration at the time clearly shows that in its dealings with the West German Government from 1951 onwards, Australia actively sought young healthy migrants. In 1951 the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, issued a press release on the possibility of initiating a German migration scheme, stating that:

Initially it is intended to bring only single persons or childless married couples to Australia, at a later stage when the accommodation position permits, family groups will also be included.<sup>39</sup>

Later in 1951, following talks with German Foreign Office Officials, Chief Migration Officer Greenhalg reported from Cologne that:

German authorities are naturally anxious to dispose of some of the family units....I think that if we insist on single men and women only they might very well begin to think of applying some embargoes which they do not at present contemplate.<sup>40</sup>

In May 1952, following the visit of a German delegation to Australia for the express purpose of negotiating a bilateral migration agreement, the situation had not altered. Australia still campaigned for young single men and women, while as reported by AM Morris of the Department of External Affairs in Canberra, the Germans ‘would prefer more family groups, particularly as the 25-35 age groups are sadly depleted already’. Morris outlined the German situation: ‘Whereas prewar the average wage earner supported 2.3 dependants, the corresponding figure is now 4.2.’<sup>41</sup> In a report of the meetings with the German delegation, Morris wrote: ‘The Germans would consider ideal one third of all migrants to be comprised of family groups.’<sup>42</sup> However, the actual wording of the finalised 1952 agreement did not specify annual migrant quotas, with the Australian Government reserving the right ‘of final selection of migrants and of specifying the numbers and types of migrants that will be accepted’.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Median age at 1947 and 1961 census years respectively – UK born: 52, 46; Italian born: 43, 32; Netherlands born: 44, 27; Australian born: 28, 27; German born: 53, 27. *ibid.*, 31.

<sup>39</sup> NAA: A445, 194/2/4, Migration (Refugees) - Question of admission Pt 4, 1950 – 1950. Six page Press Release c.1951, 2.

<sup>40</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/4107. Letter from Greenhalg, Cologne, to Heyes, Canberra. c.1951, 2.

<sup>41</sup> NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4 Part 1, Germany - Foreign Relations - Australian Representation – Commercial, 1948 – 1951. Three page report for Australian Embassy Bonn, from AM Morris, Canberra, 12 May 1952.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* three page report on Meetings with German Delegation in Canberra May 1952, prepared by Morris, Department of External Affairs, for Australian Embassy Bonn, 12 May 1952, 2. In attendance at the meeting were Heyes, Nutt, Watson, Drummond and Charles from the Department of Immigration, Morris from Department of External Affairs, and the German delegation of Herrn Wolff, Middlemann, Brunhoff and Ehmke.

<sup>43</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/18, Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council - Agenda and Minutes 18th Meeting 19 September 1952, Agenda Item No.4 ‘Australia/Germany Migration Agreement’.



In operation, the bilateral agreement did not bring the numbers of young single migrants that the Australian Government had hoped for. The Federal Republic of Germany actively sought to retain its youth, whom it regarded as necessary for the rebuilding of its nation.<sup>44</sup> After five years of operation the assisted passage scheme had averaged only 40 per cent workers to 60 per cent dependants, a ratio too low for the Australian Government's targets.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore the Australian Government continually expressed its dissatisfaction with the West German Government not fulfilling its obligations in the spirit in which the agreement was formalised. They did not, however, act on this frustration, seeking rather to keep relations cordial.<sup>46</sup>

The Migrant Database attests to the Australian Government's relative success in recruiting young, if not single, German migrants. This appears in part due to the encouragement of family migration. Figure 4, below, and Figure 11 in Appendix 1.13, show that the 21-25 year age group dominated both the Special Project and Assisted Passage schemes, followed by migrants aged 26-30 years. The high percentage of 0-15 year old children in Figure 17 in Appendix 1.19, is accounted for by the fact that children under 16 years of age were not required to fill in an individual RA2 Form on arrival in Australia. Instead, they retrospectively filled out a registration form on their sixteenth birthday.<sup>47</sup> Thus in many cases these retrospective forms fail to record the visa under which the child came to Australia. Given the majority of these 'unknowns' arrived as children between 1952 and 1965, it is reasonable to assume that they came as part of a family unit under assisted passage. If we add these unknown retrospectives to Figure 9 it would make relatively little difference except to raise the number of 0-15 year old arrivals to above that of the 46-60 year age group. This is a likely picture of the age structure of the West German Assisted Passage scheme given its preference for single adult migrants and young families.

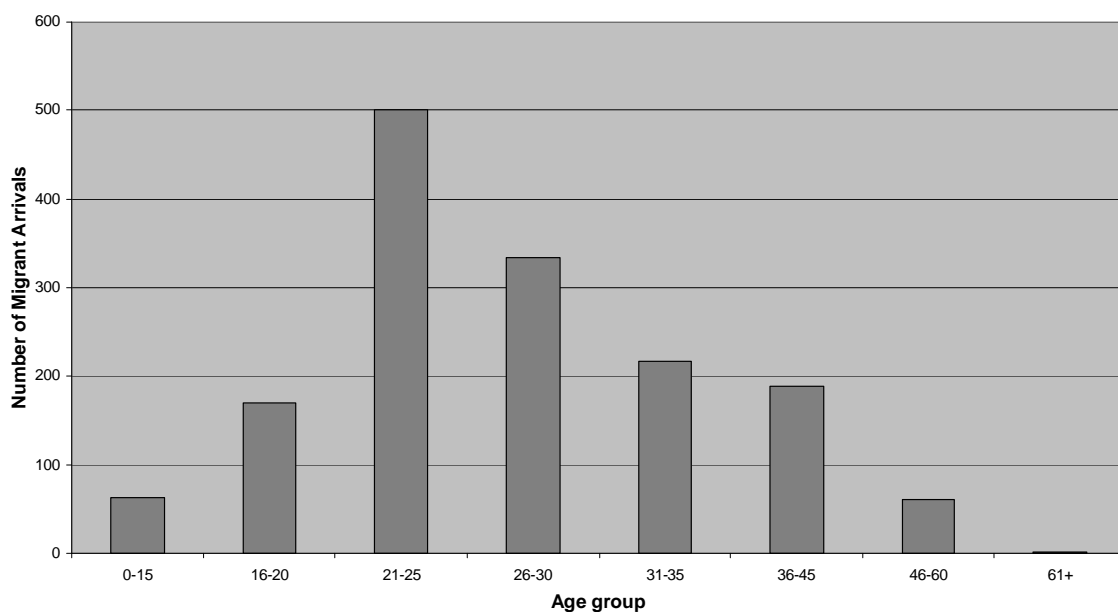
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<sup>44</sup> After only two and a half years of operation the West German Government set down new limitations for the selection of German migrants. Among other things from 1955 the West German Government stipulated that 'male German workers below 25 years are precluded from program unless emigrating in family unit'. Likewise, 'recruitment of unmarried agricultural workers can only be permitted if they emigrate in family unit'. NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4 Part 2, Federal Republic of Germany - Relations with Australia – Migration, 1952 – 1964. Letter to Heyes from Driver (Australian Mission Bonn), 12 July 1955, 1.

<sup>45</sup> NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4 Part 2. Five page memo from Department of Immigration 19 May 1957, 2. See also letter from Greenhalg to Heyes 26 August 1953, 'the ratio of dependants to workers remains too low, being less than one for one where we need at least two for one'.

<sup>46</sup> See NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4 Part 2. Letter from Greenhalg to Heyes, 30 July 1954, 'it does not seem that the Germans have the right to impose these limitations but as we have always admitted the method of negotiating programmes I have not raised this point so far'; Patrick Shaw, Australian Embassy Bonn to Department of Immigration 3 February 1956: 'it would be difficult for us to nag the Germans too much about their not fulfilling their immigration agreement with us'.

<sup>47</sup> Advice received from Archivist at the National Archives of Australia, South Australian office.



**Figure 4**  
**German Assisted Passage visa arrivals to South Australia by age, 1952-1965**  
**Source: Migrant Database**

A closer look at the individual visa schemes gives an even clearer picture of the age structure of the German migrant community. If we look at the Special Project scheme which resulted in the existence of a group of terribly disadvantaged young German men predominantly living and employed in isolated work camps throughout Australia, the Migrant Database sample clearly shows the scheme's preference for young single migrants.<sup>48</sup> The sample data confirms the Special Project scheme's preference for young single men, with a clear majority of 79 per cent aged 21-29 years.<sup>49</sup> While recruitment was of predominantly young healthy German tradesmen, the scheme also targeted highly skilled tradesmen and engineers for specific purposes, as reflected in the small number of arrivals in the 31-60+ age ranges.<sup>50</sup> While the majority of tradesmen were recruited essentially for manual and skilled trade labour, a number of these older, more qualified Germans were sought for large national works projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme.<sup>51</sup> As we learnt in Chapter Two of the thesis, through the reports of

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter Two of the thesis for details of their disadvantaged position in the migrant and Australian communities.

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 1.13, Figure 11.

<sup>50</sup> From January to August 1951 the 37-45 year age group accounted for 17.8 per cent of the total number of German tradesmen to Australia. 55.3 per cent were 21-28 years of age, with the remaining 26.9 per cent being 29-36 years of age. Categories of workers included carpenters, plant and motor mechanics, electric mechanics, plumbers, general plant operators, excavator operators, diamond drillers, and special categories. NAA: A26/8, 4903/4, German Tradesmen Statistics. Statistical Graph for January-August 1951.

<sup>51</sup> See Siobhan McHugh, *The Snowy: The people behind the power* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1995), 34, 95, 149; and Homeyer, 'The ESTEA Scheme,' 77-93.

departmental social workers, these older, more qualified men were likely to have left wives and dependent children in Germany, a situation which often resulted in severe financial hardship for the German men in question.

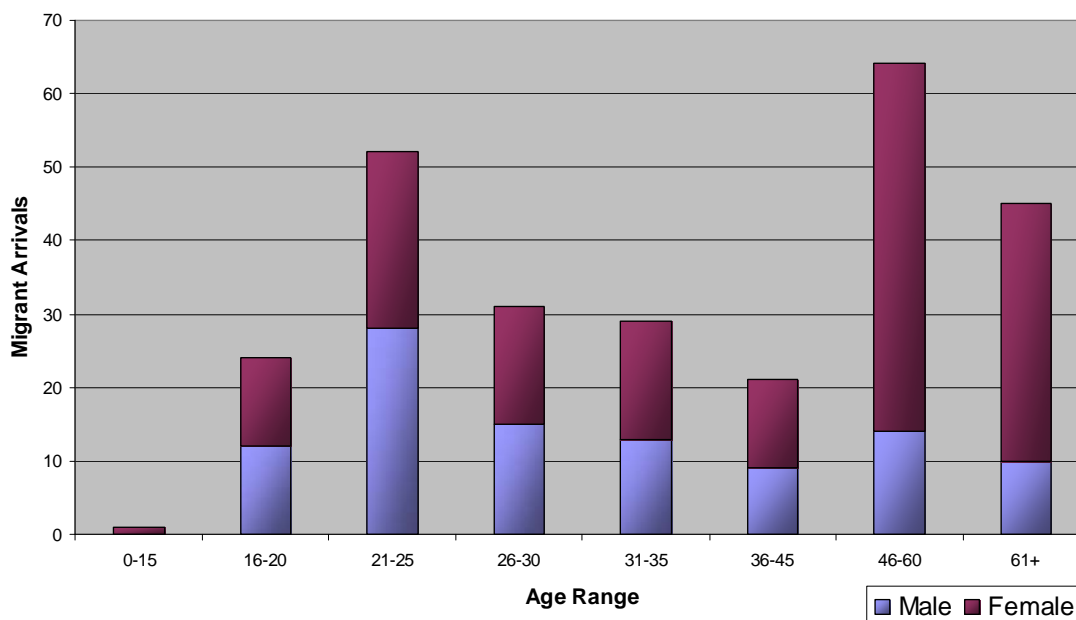
Another deviation from the overall age structure appears in the full fare paying migration schemes. Older female migrants dominated these schemes, as is demonstrated in Figure 5 below. Of all Full Fare migrant arrivals, 42 per cent were aged forty-six or over, and only 22 per cent were thirty years or under. A similar pattern is visible for Migrant Visa arrivals, with 40 per cent being over forty-five years of age and only 32 per cent between twenty-one and thirty years of age.<sup>52</sup> If we consider both groups together, as non-assisted migrants, Figure 5 still reveals a discernable but less pronounced age deviation. The resulting proportions are 40 per cent aged over forty-five years and 36 per cent aged between 21 to 30 years.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, the data still suggests a predominance of older German migrant arrivals under these non-assisted migration schemes, which suggests perhaps the emergence of a family oriented postwar German migrant community whereby established assisted migrants sponsored their elderly dependants still resident in Germany.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix 1.20-1.21, Figures 18-19.

<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, the presence of younger German migrants in these two non-assisted visa schemes could suggest one of two things: firstly that they were predominantly dependants of Special Project workers already residing in Australia; or secondly that they were the *Volksdeutsche* migrants, sponsored by the Lutheran Church of Australia as discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>54</sup> This older demographic is in marked comparison to the young worker and family oriented targets of the West German Assisted Passage and Special Project migration schemes. The dominance of elderly migrants in under full fare paying visas is borne out by the specifications for the entry of German nationals to Australia who fall outside of the assisted passage agreement.

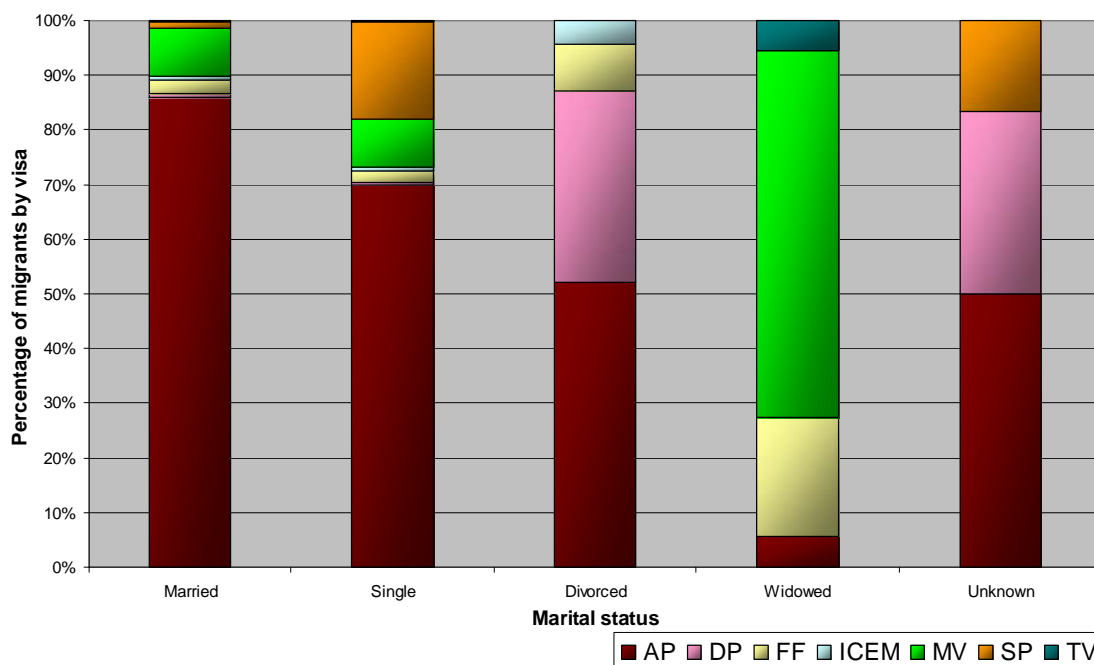


**Figure 5**  
**MV and FF visa arrivals to South Australia by age and gender, 1949-1953**  
**Source: Migrant Database**

### 1.7 Marital status and family structure

Family structure speaks to the nature of the German migrant community and to the Australian Government's relative success or failure to meet their worker to dependant ratios. During the 1950s the Australian Government came to realise, through the experience of its Social Welfare Section, the value of family migration to a migrant's mental health, and therefore to the migrant's ability to settle and assimilate into Australian society.<sup>55</sup> The Migrant Database records the marital status of all migrants on arrival, as recorded on the RA2 form. The sample data, as illustrated in Figure 6 below, reveals that 86 per cent and 70 per cent of all married and single German arrivals, respectively, came to South Australia as assisted migrants. Conversely, over 80 per cent of all widows came as unassisted migrants. Less than 10 per cent each of married and single Germans arrived unassisted on Migrant Visas. The government's assisted passage scheme accounted for the majority of married and hence family migration to South Australia.

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter Two of the thesis for further discussion of this point.



**Figure 6**  
**Marital status and visa type as percentage, 1949-1965**  
 Source: Migrant Database

The sample data shows that half of all German arrivals to South Australia were married. A further 44 per cent came as single migrants, while widowed and divorced migrants made up just 4 per cent of total German arrivals from 1949-1965.<sup>56</sup> The dominance of family and single migrants in the sample data corresponds with the bilateral agreement's goals. In its first year of operation the agreement allowed for 4,000 wage earners and their families (comprising 1,000 wage earners and 3,000 dependants), 2,700 single workers, and a further 1,300 dependants of already arrived Special Project workers.<sup>57</sup> In this first year of operation the assisted passage ratio of workers to dependants was 46:54 and obviously year to year there were minor fluctuations in targets and realised numbers. Still, the government remained committed to bringing out married families and young single migrants for the life of the agreement.

If large numbers of married German migrants were arriving under assisted passage, then it is useful to determine the makeup of these families. The sample data records 840 children entering South Australia under the various German migration schemes between 1949 and 1965. As we can see in Table 4 the most common family unit grouping consisted of one

<sup>56</sup> See Appendix 1.22, Figure 20.

<sup>57</sup> NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4 Part 1, Negotiation of Migrations Agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany (Part II), May 1952, 6.

child and two parents, which accounts for 43 per cent of total family migration.<sup>58</sup> If we plot the number of family arrivals against the number of children per family it becomes evident that only a very small number of family units were single parents.<sup>59</sup> Out of a total 435 family arrivals the Migrant Database records 411 married family units, or 822 adult migrants, and twenty-four unmarried family units. If we break the sample data down further it reveals that of the unmarried family units five were divorced, twelve were single migrants, and seven were widowed migrants, with thirty-one dependant children among them.

The implication of the sample data's preponderance of married family units is that 822 individual adult migrants along with 809 children, or about 73.5 per cent of total German arrivals, came to South Australia as part of a married family unit. That is, over two thirds of all postwar German arrivals to South Australia emigrated as part of a two-parent family unit.<sup>60</sup> The next largest group, at 14 per cent, consisted of married but childless migrants. Widowed and divorced migrants constituted a mere 3 per cent and 1 per cent respectively of total German arrivals to South Australia. The sample data confirms what we learnt in Chapter Two of the thesis where Holt's December 1952 address to the CIAC announced that migration policy was moving away from the short-term economic gains of directable labour and to the longer-term societal gains of fostering family migration.<sup>61</sup>

**Table 4**  
*German Child Arrivals 1949-1965*

<b>Children</b>	<b>2 parent family</b>	<b>1 parent family</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	186	18	204
<b>2</b>	116	5	121
<b>3</b>	65	1	66
<b>4</b>	29	0	29
<b>5</b>	12	0	12
<b>6</b>	1	0	1
<b>7</b>	2	0	2
<b>Total families</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>435</b>
<b>Total children</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>840</b>

**Source: Migrant Database**

<sup>58</sup> For the purposes of this study a family unit consists of one or more parents with one or more dependant children 16 years of age or younger.

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix 1.14, Figure 12.

<sup>60</sup> See Appendix 1.23, Figure 21 for a visual breakdown of this.

<sup>61</sup> NAA: A445, 140/4/19. Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Agenda and Minutes of 19th Meeting, 17 December 1952. Minutes, Agenda item No. 2, 'Address by the Hon. H.E. Holt, MP'. See also Chapter One, 31.

Early negotiations over the bilateral assisted passage agreement indicate a particular social and familial barrier to the emigration of Germany's postwar population. In 1951, the Chief Migration Officer in Cologne, West Germany, wrote to Secretary Heyes, observing that 'it is very common for single persons to have responsibilities to family units which they would not be anxious to leave behind them'.<sup>62</sup> Acknowledging the family responsibilities of many young migrants, and in their desire to attract this young workforce to Australia, initial assisted passage negotiations by the Department of Immigration made explicit provision for dependants of migrants already settled in Australia.<sup>63</sup> This included the sponsoring of widowed migrants who, on obtaining a Landing Permit, could enter Australia on a Migrant or Full Fare visa. The Migrant Database suggests the number of widowed migrants entering South Australia was small, comprising less than 1 per cent of the sample group.<sup>64</sup> Amongst these widowed migrants is a relatively high level of widows, as opposed to widowers, which suggests that between 1949 and 1965 young German migrants arrived in South Australia, and once established, sponsored their older widowed mothers to follow them. If we take the sample data as representative of the South Australian situation it suggests the presence of chain migration amongst the state's German migrant community, albeit on a relatively small scale.

### **1.8 Settling in South Australia**

In the early years of the Australian government's immigration program, Port Adelaide was the primary destination for migrants disembarking in South Australia. This practice dwindled after 1952, due to increases in the number of vessels and migrant arrivals to Australia in general which brought with it the need for larger processing facilities. Many of South Australia's Special Project migrants disembarked at Port Adelaide, but from 1952 onwards, arrival by train from the eastern states was more common. The Migrant Database shows that while 122 migrants, or 5.5 per cent of total German arrivals, disembarked at Port Adelaide, the overwhelming majority, 83 per cent, disembarked in Victoria as illustrated in Table 5, below. While some migrant vessels continued to make planned stops

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<sup>62</sup> NAA: A443, 1951/15/4107, 4 page letter from Greenhalg to Heyes re. Multiple meetings with the High Commissioners Administration and the German Federal Ministry for Expellees, 2.

<sup>63</sup> In 1948 the Department of Immigration outlined the classes of German nationals eligible for admission to Australia. Until 1952 these migrants also fell outside the requirements for assisted passage. The first two eligible categories were: 1. Wives, single minor sons, unmarried daughters and fiancées of persons domiciled in Australia; 2. Parents of persons domiciled in Australia. NAA: A445, 235/1/25, 2 page letter from Heyes to CMO Australia House London, 27 September 1948, 1. For provision of Special Project dependants to come under assisted passage see NAA: A1838, 29/1/3/4 Part 1, Negotiation of Migration Agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany (Part II), May 1952, 6.

<sup>64</sup> See Appendix 1.22, Figure 20.

at Fremantle and Port Adelaide to disembark passengers, the sample data suggests the majority of South Australia's postwar German migrants entered Australia through the larger ports of Melbourne and Sydney.<sup>65</sup>

Of the 122 migrants who did arrive direct to Port Adelaide, more than half were Special Project migrants. By the time they left Europe, these workers had secured two-year employment contracts with Australian employers. Consequently, Special Project migrants were transported direct to their employment destinations, bypassing the need to pass through a migrant processing centre. This process reveals in part the disadvantaged circumstances of Special Project migrants. Their first contact with people in Australia invariably involved their recruiters and employers. They had little chance to meet other migrants in processing centres or orient themselves after their long journey. As we saw in Chapter Two of the thesis, this situation commonly bred isolation amongst the Special Project migrant community as well as an over-dependence on their work environment for social and cultural adjustment.

The data reveals that the majority of German arrivals to South Australia, 91 per cent, journeyed by bus or train after a short stay in a New South Wales or Victorian migrant processing centre such as Bonegilla or Benalla.<sup>66</sup> Thus, most German migrants to South Australia were recruited through migrant centres located in the eastern states of Australia. This raises the question whether German migrants arrived in Australia with the intent of settling in South Australia, or whether employment opportunities dictated their final destination. We can conclude from Ingrid Muenstermann's 1997 sociological study of the postwar German community that some migrants did intend to settle in South Australia.<sup>67</sup> Muenstermann's study reveals, however, that South Australia consistently ranked third in settlement preference behind New South Wales and Victoria, by migrants who eventually made South Australia their home.<sup>68</sup> Thus the Migrant Database supports Muenstermann's finding that employment opportunity rather than personal preference was the predominant and deciding factor for German migrants settling in South Australia.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See Appendix 1.24, Figure 22.

<sup>66</sup> See Glenda Sluga, *Bonegilla: 'A place of no hope'* (Parkville: University of Melbourne, 1988).

<sup>67</sup> Muenstermann, 'German immigrants,' 77-78.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, Table 4.10, 84.

<sup>69</sup> Muenstermann also concludes that German migrants primarily chose their destination on the basis of employment. *ibid.*, 92.



**Table 5**  
**Australian Port of Disembarkation for German migrants, 1949-1965**

<b>State of Disembarkation</b>	<b>Number of Disembarkations</b>
SA	122
VIC	1827
NSW	192
WA	37
QLD	8
NT	14
Unknown	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>2216</b>

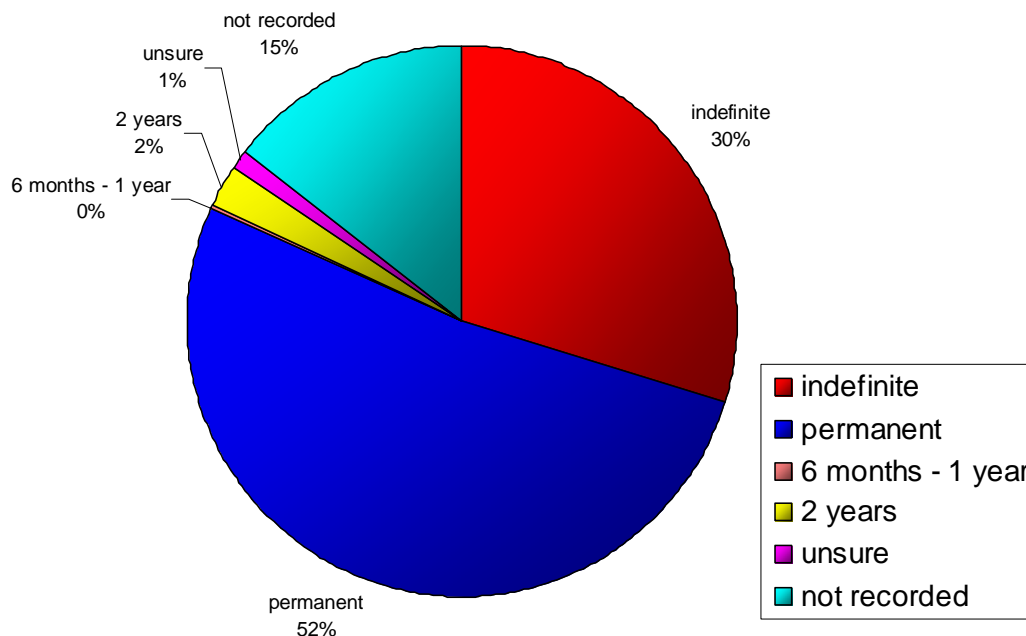
**Source: Migrant Database**

### **1.9 Length of stay**

Tied closely to preferred destination was a migrant's intended length of stay. On arrival in Australia, migrants were required to record, on their RA2 form, how long they intended to reside in the country. The Migrant Database collates this field, revealing six main categories defining a migrant's intended length of stay: permanent, indefinite, six months to one year, two years, unsure, and unrecorded. Of the total migrant sample, over half of all arrivals stated that their move was permanent and one third recorded an indefinite period of residence. Only 2 per cent of all arrivals stated their intention to remain in Australia for two years or less; the majority of these were Special Project workers.<sup>70</sup> Less than a quarter of the migrants left the field blank, most likely accounted for by retrospective forms completed by child migrants on their sixteenth birthday. Figure 7 visually represents this breakdown of the migrants' intended settlement. It becomes evident that the overwhelming majority of German migrant arrivals to South Australia intended to make Australia their new home. Consequently, these migrants were motivated to establish themselves within the community on personal, social, and economic levels.

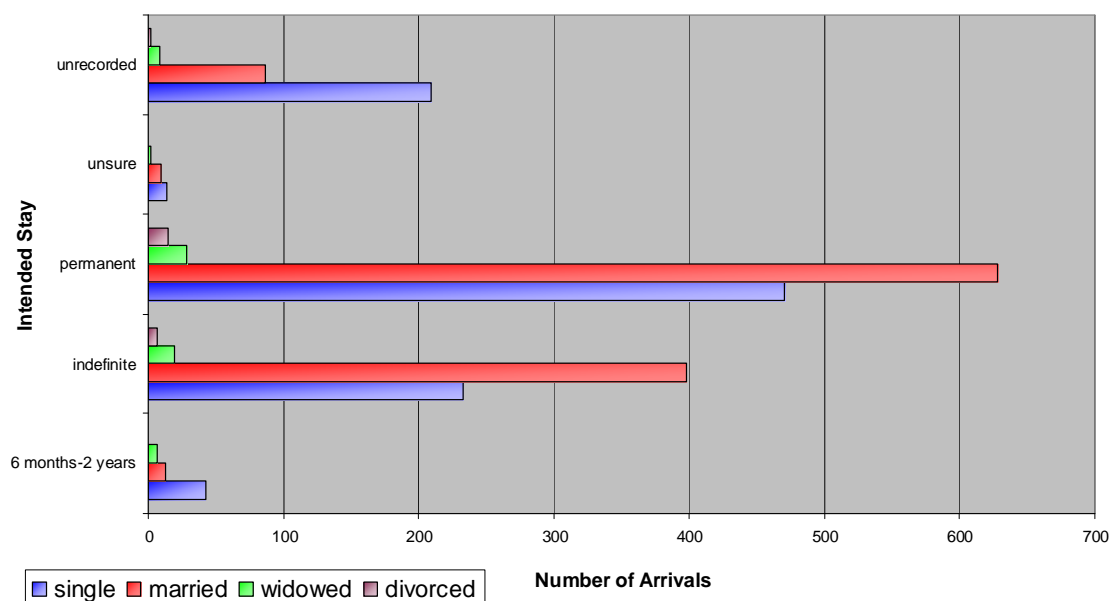
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<sup>70</sup> Of this two per cent, 64 per cent were Special Project migrants and 31 per cent were assisted migrants. Special Project migrants had the option of returning home on conclusion of their two-year work contract, so many were intending to stay only two years.



**Figure 7**  
**Intended stay of migrants on arrival, 1949-1965.**  
**Source: Migrant Database**

The data concerning the intended stay of migrants in South Australia reveals more about German emigration motivations when assessed against marital status, as in Figure 8 below. The sample data suggests that migrants intending to settle permanently or indefinitely were predominantly married, while the very small numbers of migrants intending a stay of two years or less were predominantly single. The Migrant Database also records a large number of widowed and divorced migrants whose intended stay was permanent or indefinite. If we recall the family structure from the sample data, over two thirds of postwar German arrivals to South Australia emigrated as part of a two-parent family. This, coupled with the intention of 90 per cent of all married and 73 per cent of all single migrants to stay permanently or indefinitely, suggests that the postwar South Australian German community's decision to emigrate was largely a permanent one.



**Figure 8**  
**Marital status and intended stay on arrival, 1950-1965.**  
**Source: Migrant Database**

### 1.10 Conclusion

This cursory study in historical demography builds on our knowledge of the postwar German migrant community in South Australia, elucidating their motivations for migration, be they familial, financial, social, or employment oriented. It also advances knowledge of important period of Australian immigration history and establishes some continuity between Australia's, and specifically South Australia's, early German Lutheran settlements and the post-1945 German community. By detailing the schemes under which German migrants came to South Australia between 1945 and 1965, this demographic study places German migration in the broader context of Australia's postwar mass immigration program and the nation's industrial and economic boom. Furthermore, this study supports the thesis by documenting the size and nature of the newly arriving postwar German migrant community in South Australia, extrapolating more broadly on a national level. The Migrant Database suggests that the government's bilateral assisted passage agreement supplied the bulk of South Australia's postwar German community, reinvigorating its numbers after a steady decline up to 1947. The overwhelming majority of these migrants were German-born, with the data suggesting a small percentage of ethnic Germans amongst them. Early fluctuations in the gender balance of the postwar German community,

brought about by specific migration and employment aims, such as with the Special Projects scheme, were rectified by the ensuing assisted passage scheme. The Australian Government monitored this closely, achieving a relatively stable gender balance. The new German community was heavily oriented towards families, with assisted passage migrants accounting for the majority of these married family groups. The data also suggests a small number of widows were sponsored to migrate to Australia by already established German migrants. This largely family oriented German migrant community, coupled with smaller numbers of widows and young single migrants, were attracted to settle in South Australia predominantly by employment opportunities. Significant in light of our understanding of migrant assimilation as a largely pragmatic re-settlement policy, then, this German migrant community had every reason to invest themselves civically, economically and socially in their new society.

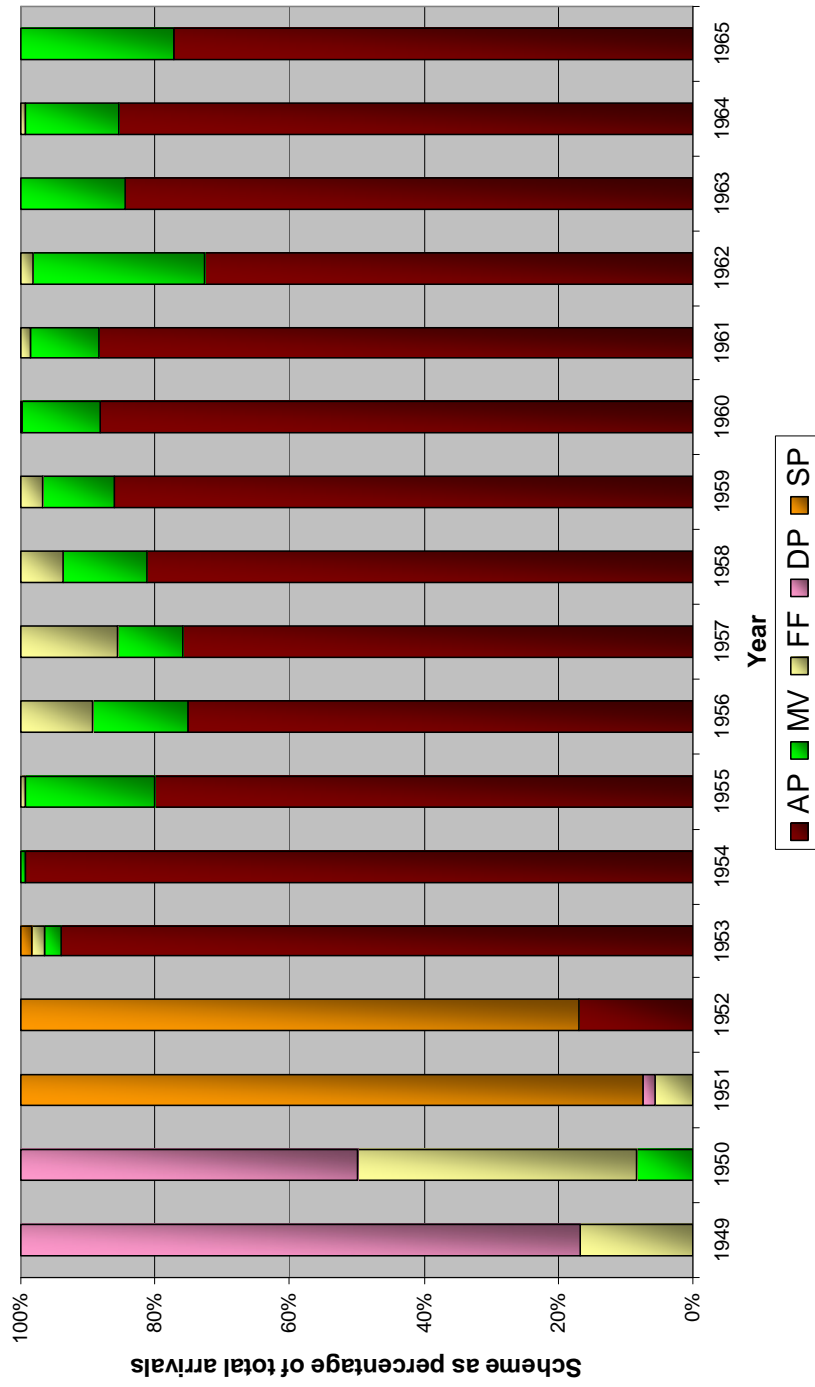
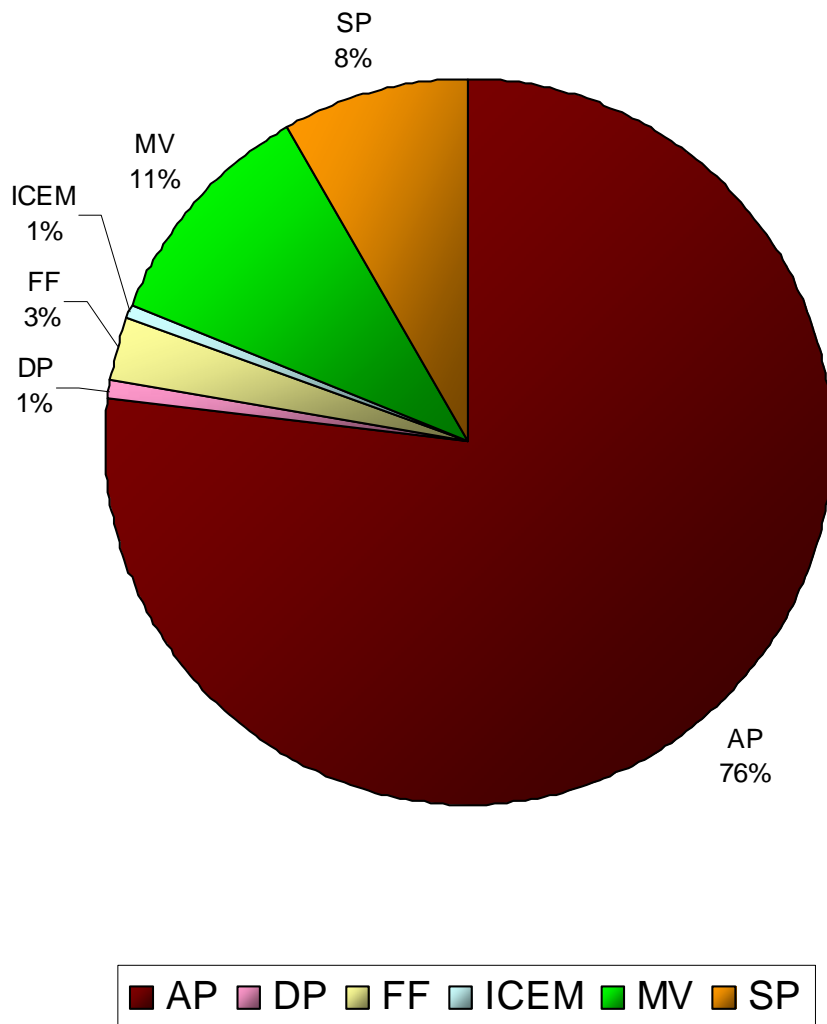
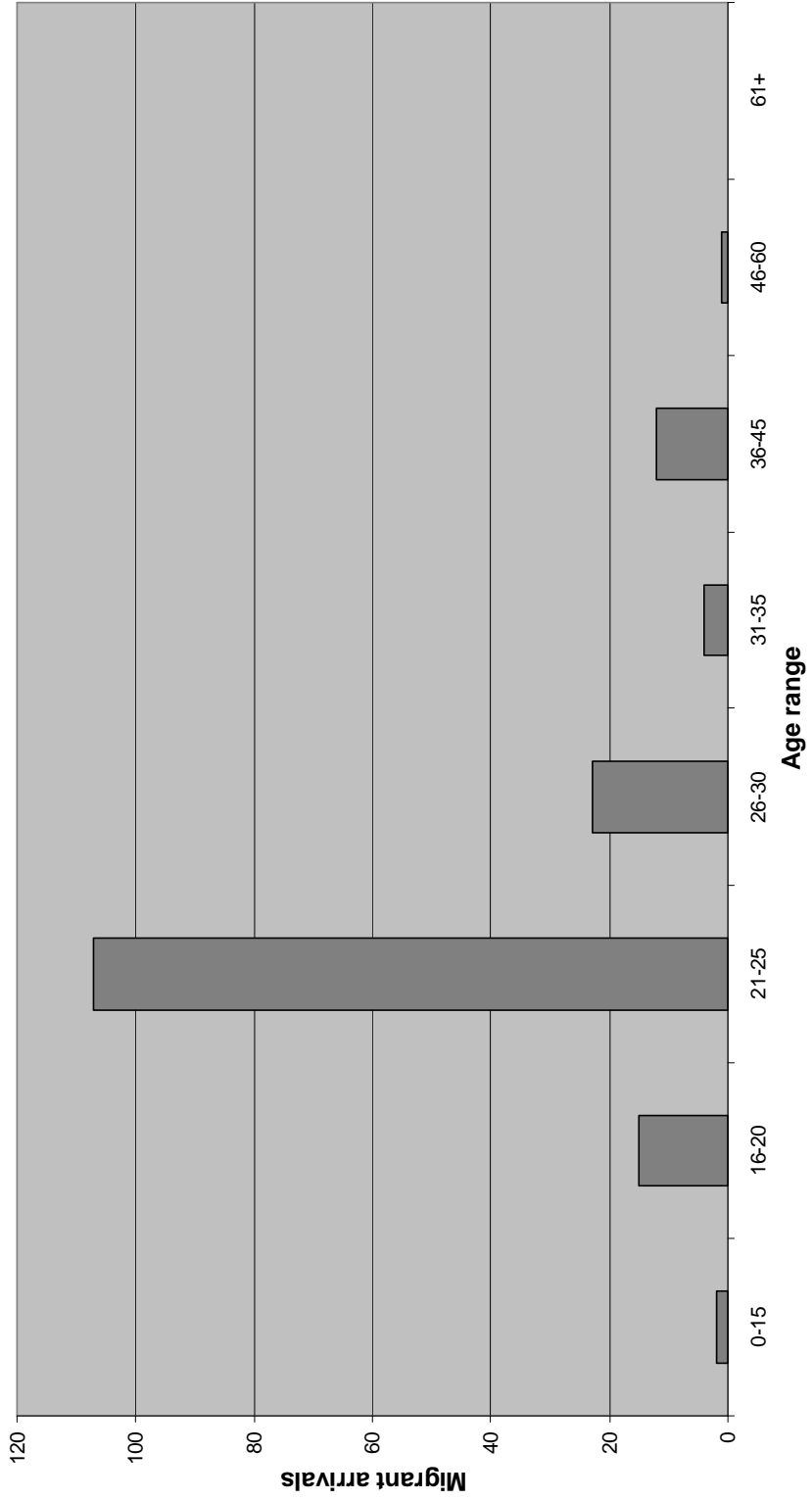


Figure 9  
German migrant arrivals as percentage 1949-1965

1.12

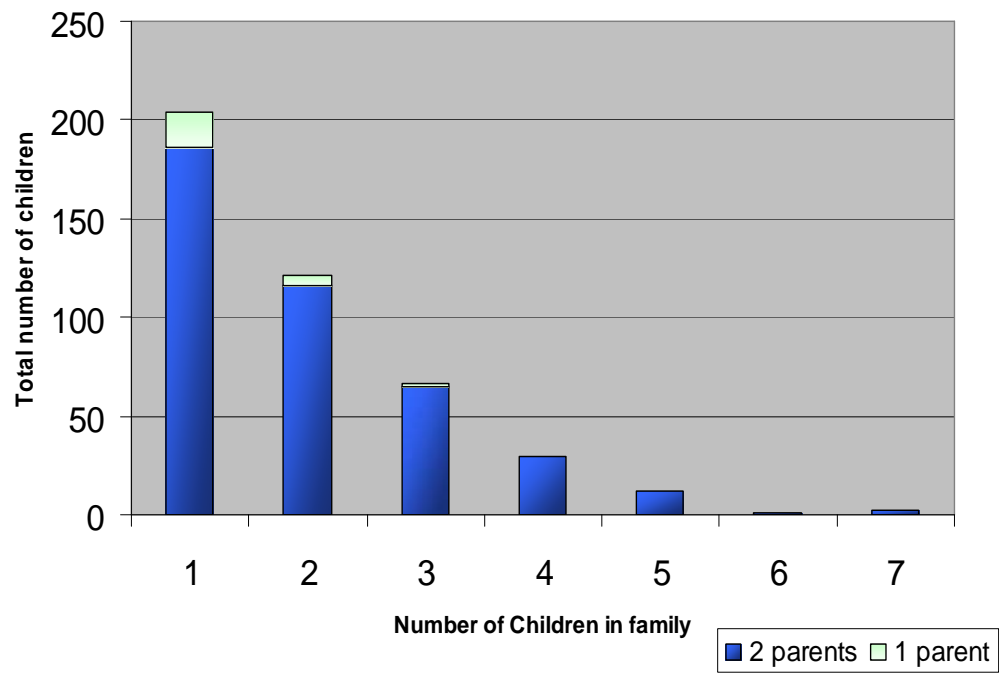


**Figure 10**  
Total major scheme arrivals as percentage 1949-1965



**Figure 11**  
SP Visa arrivals by age range 1949-1953

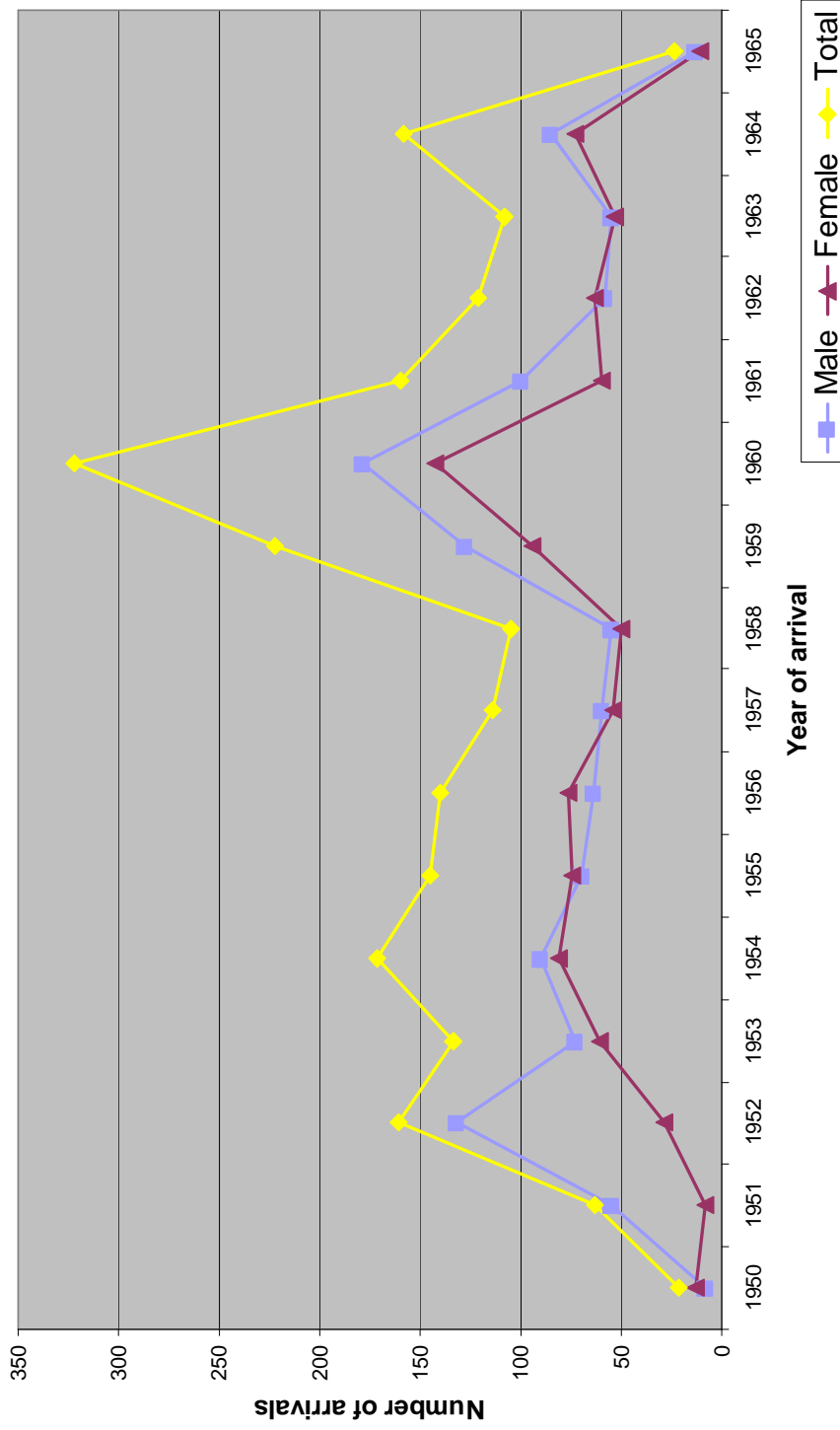
1.14

**Figure 12**

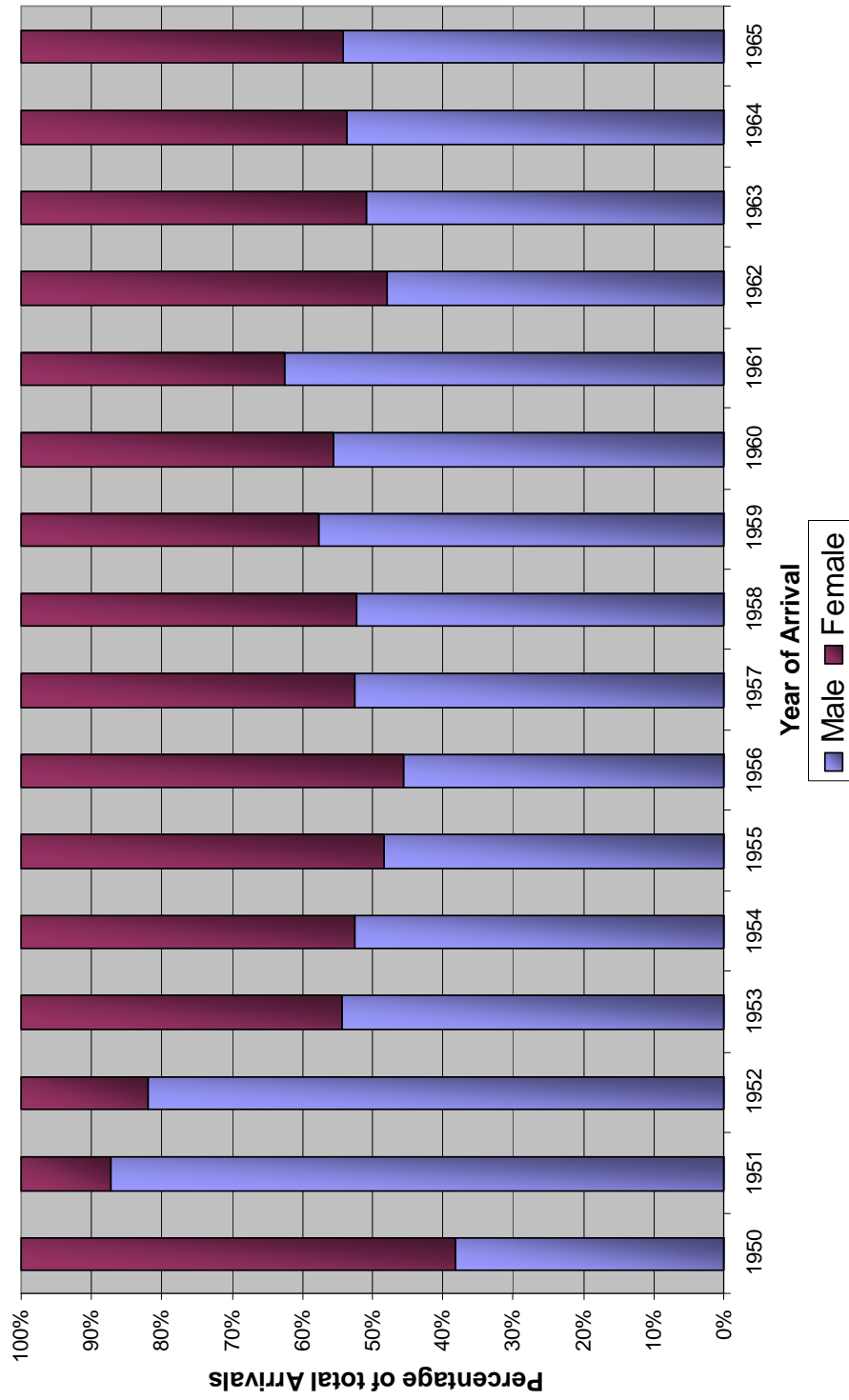
German migrant family size 1949-1965



1.15

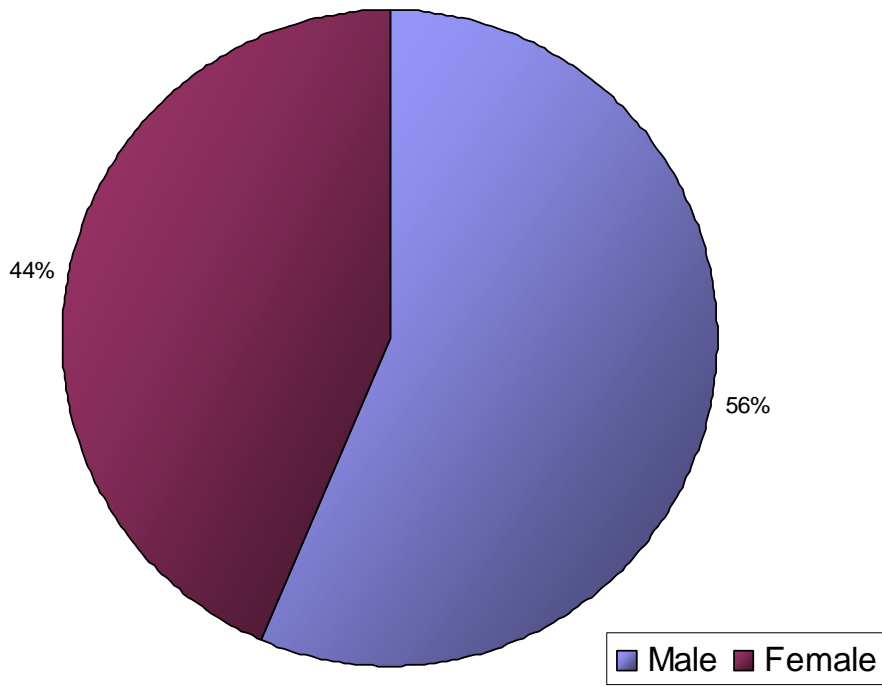


**Figure 13**  
Arrivals by year and gender 1950-1965



**Figure 14**  
Arrivals each year by gender percentage 1950-1965

1.17



**Figure 15**

Total German arrivals by gender percentage 1949-1965

1.18

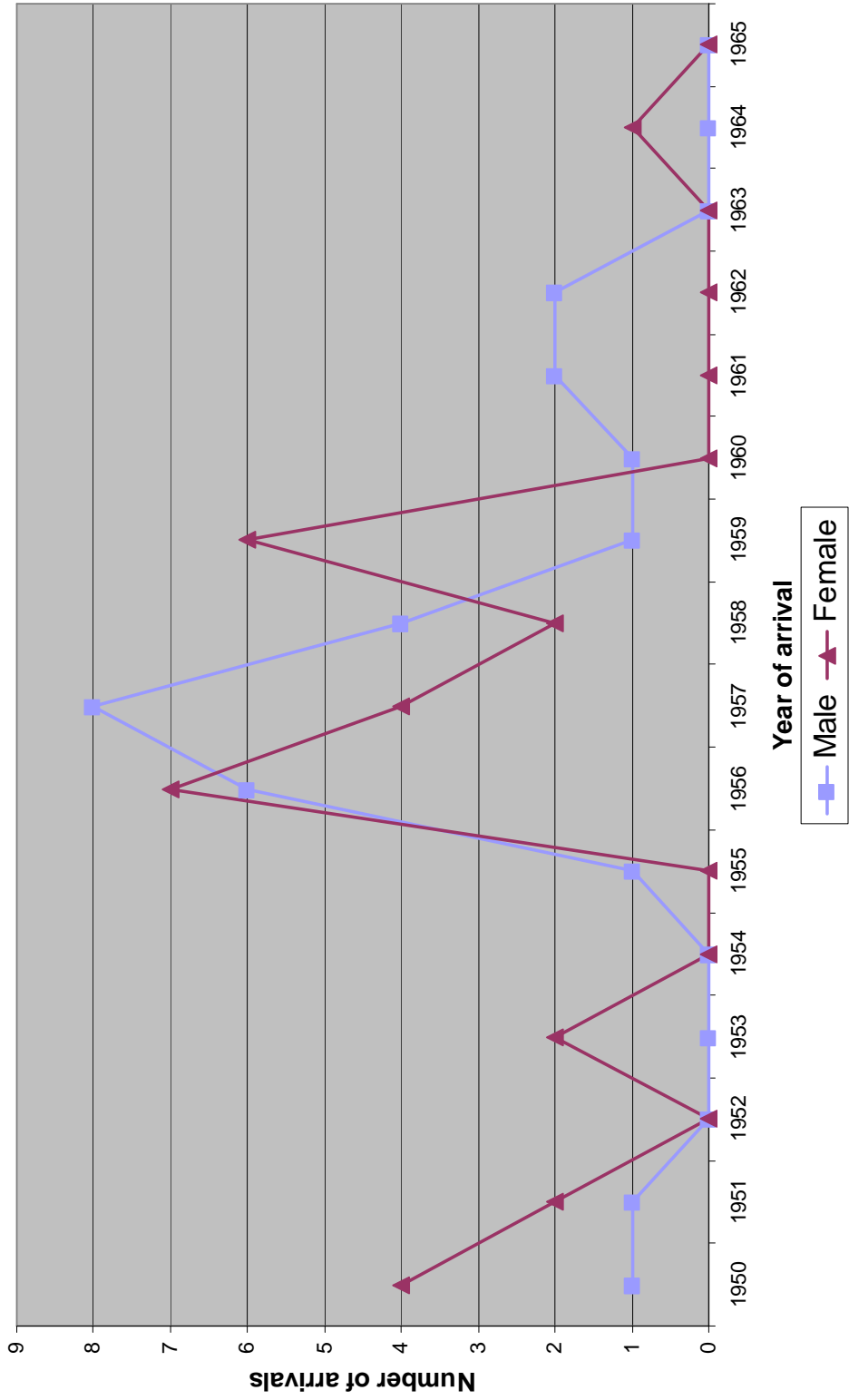
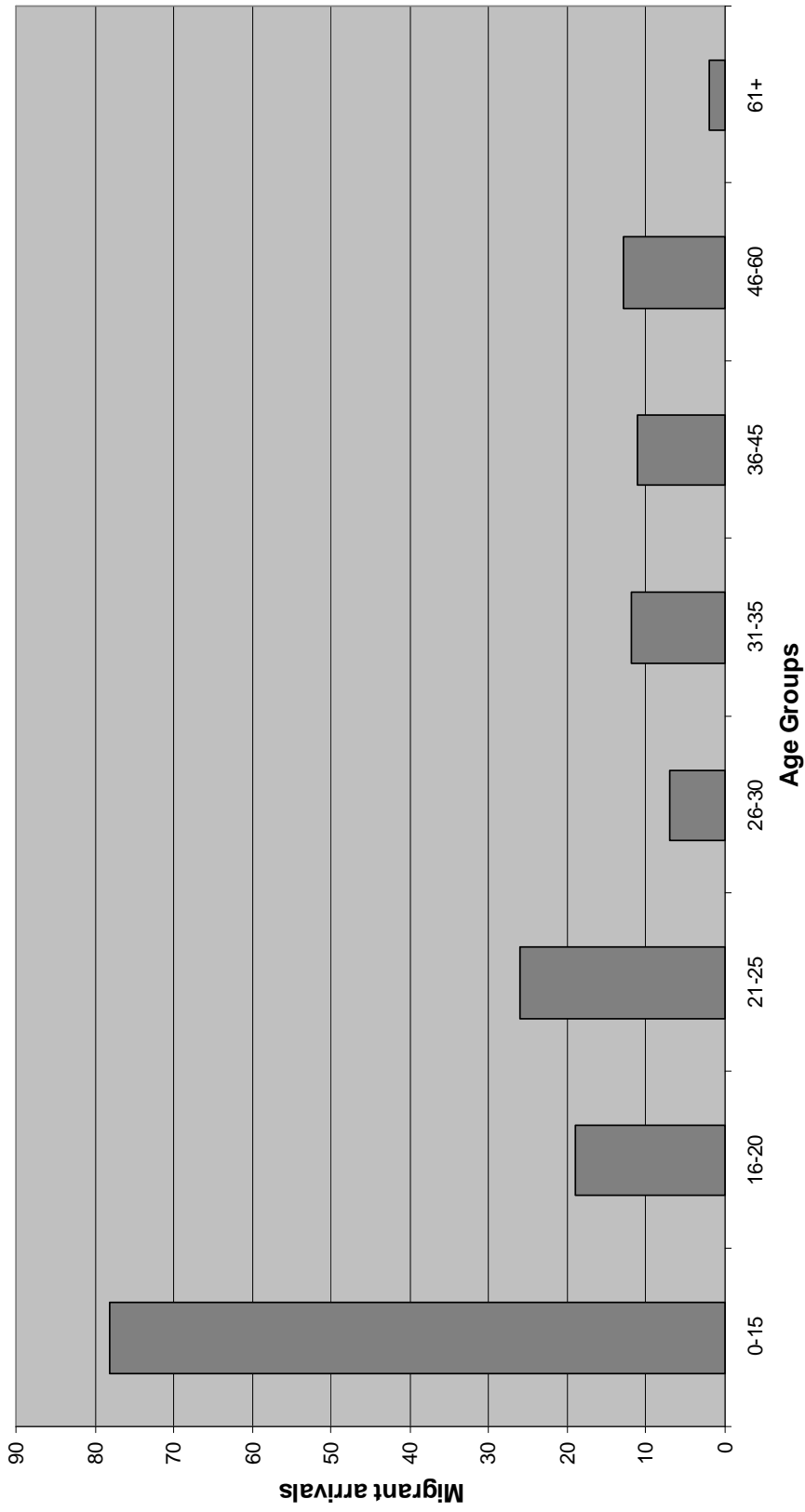
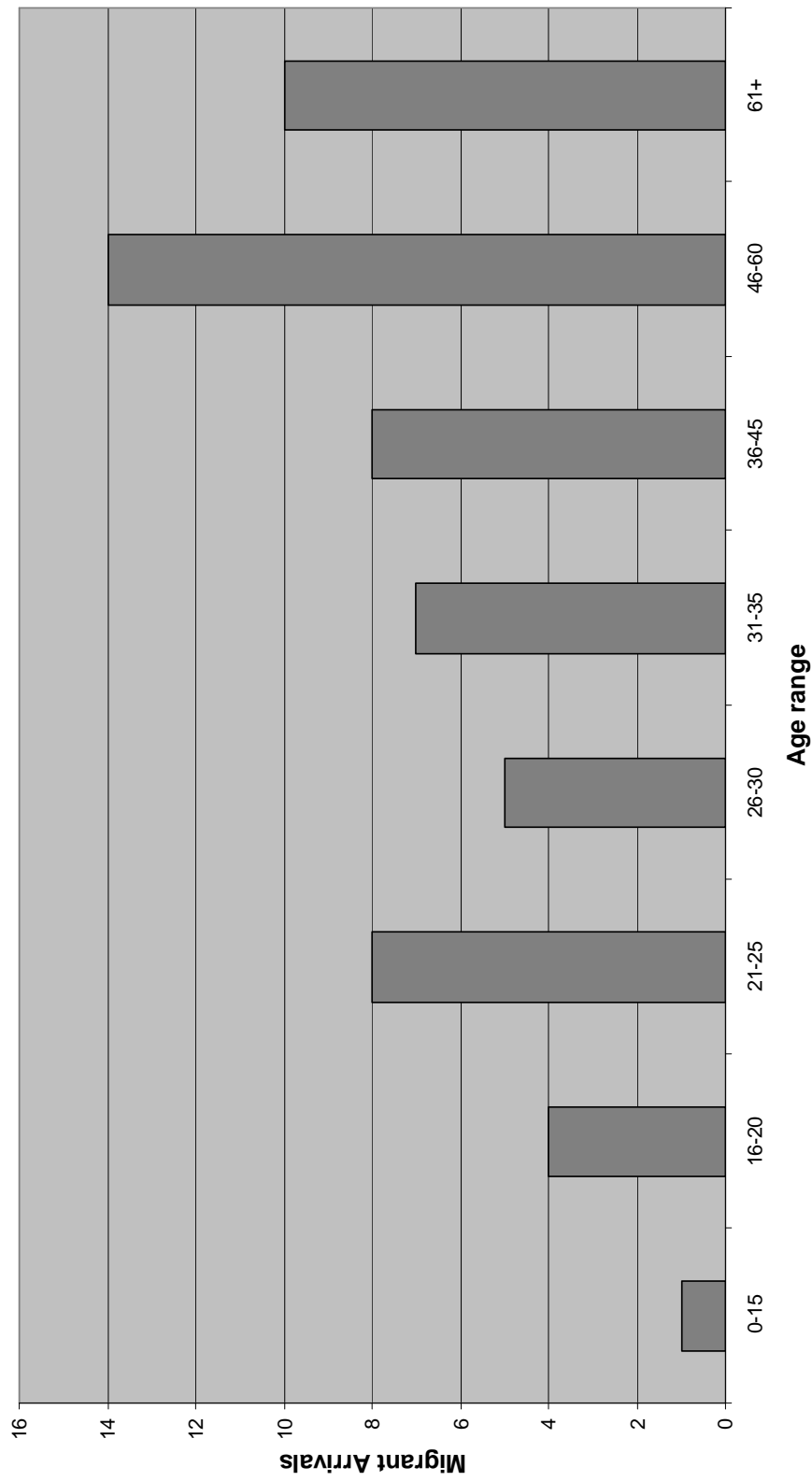


Figure 16  
FF arrivals by gender 1949-1965

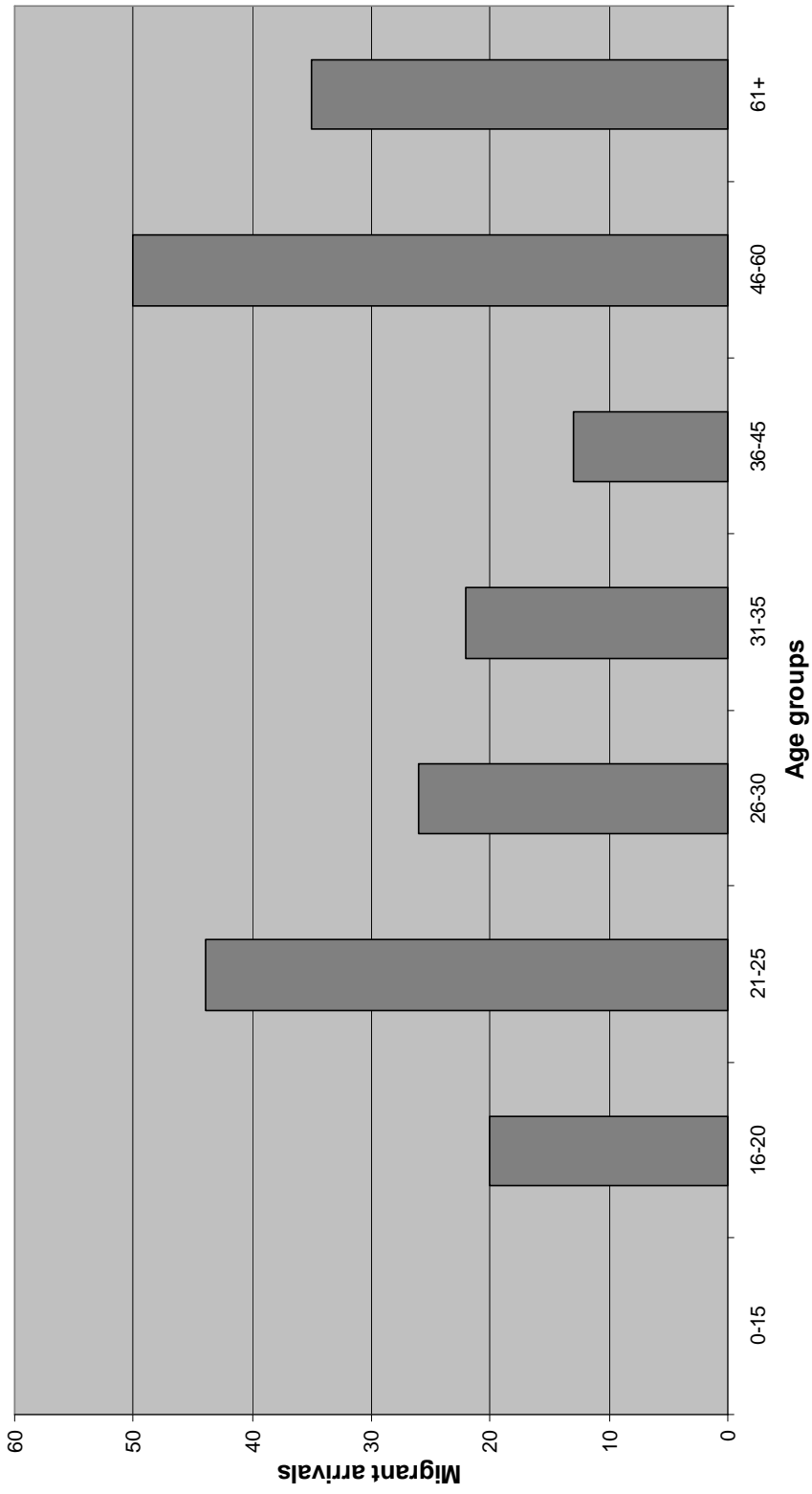


**Figure 17**  
Visa unknown by age group 1949-1965

1.20

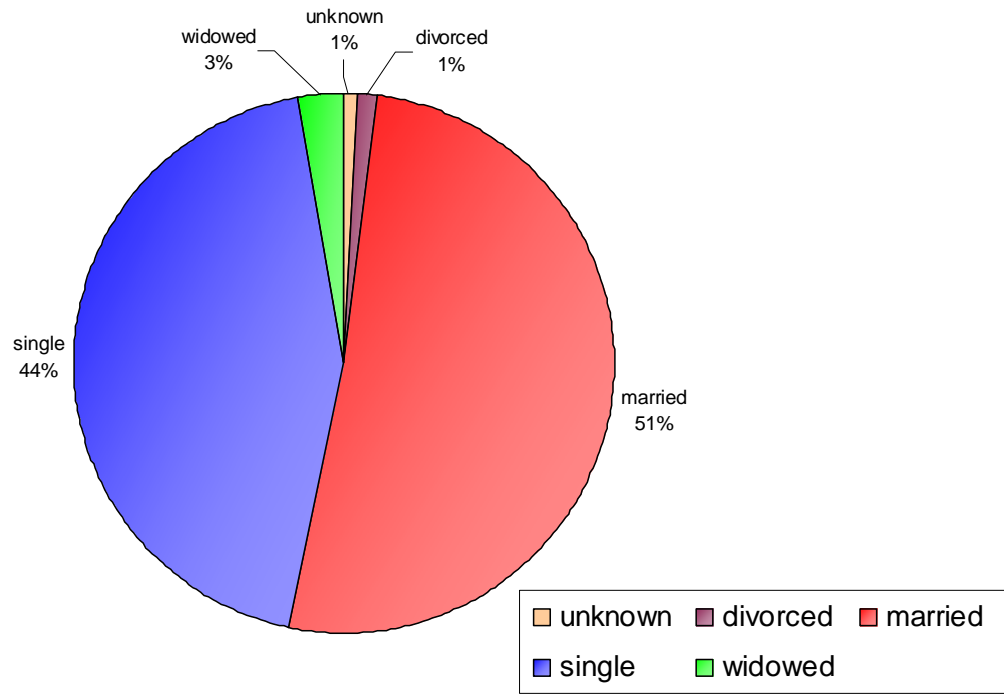


**Figure 18**  
FF visa arrivals by age range 1949-1965



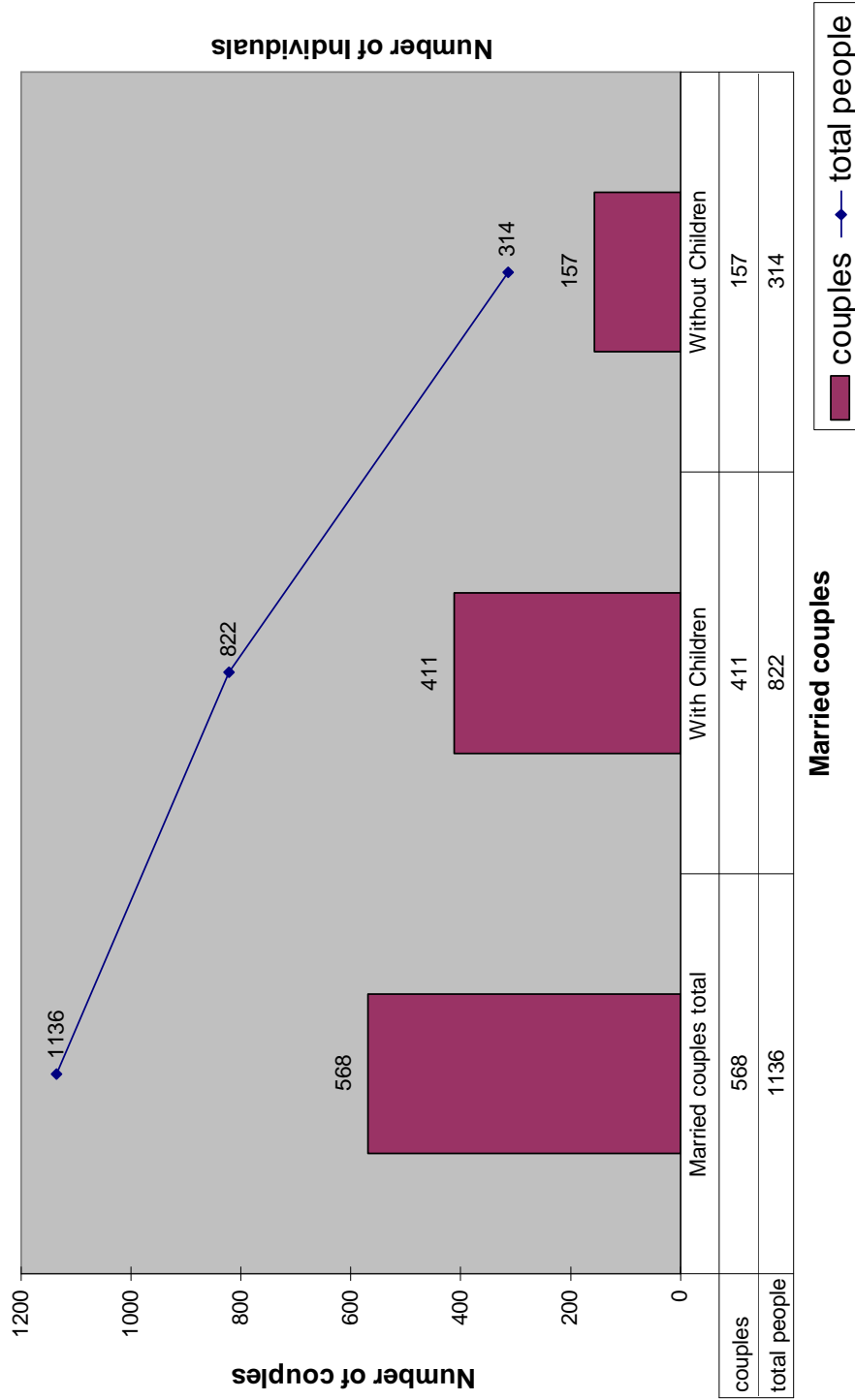
**Figure 19**  
MV arrivals by age range 1949-1965

1.22

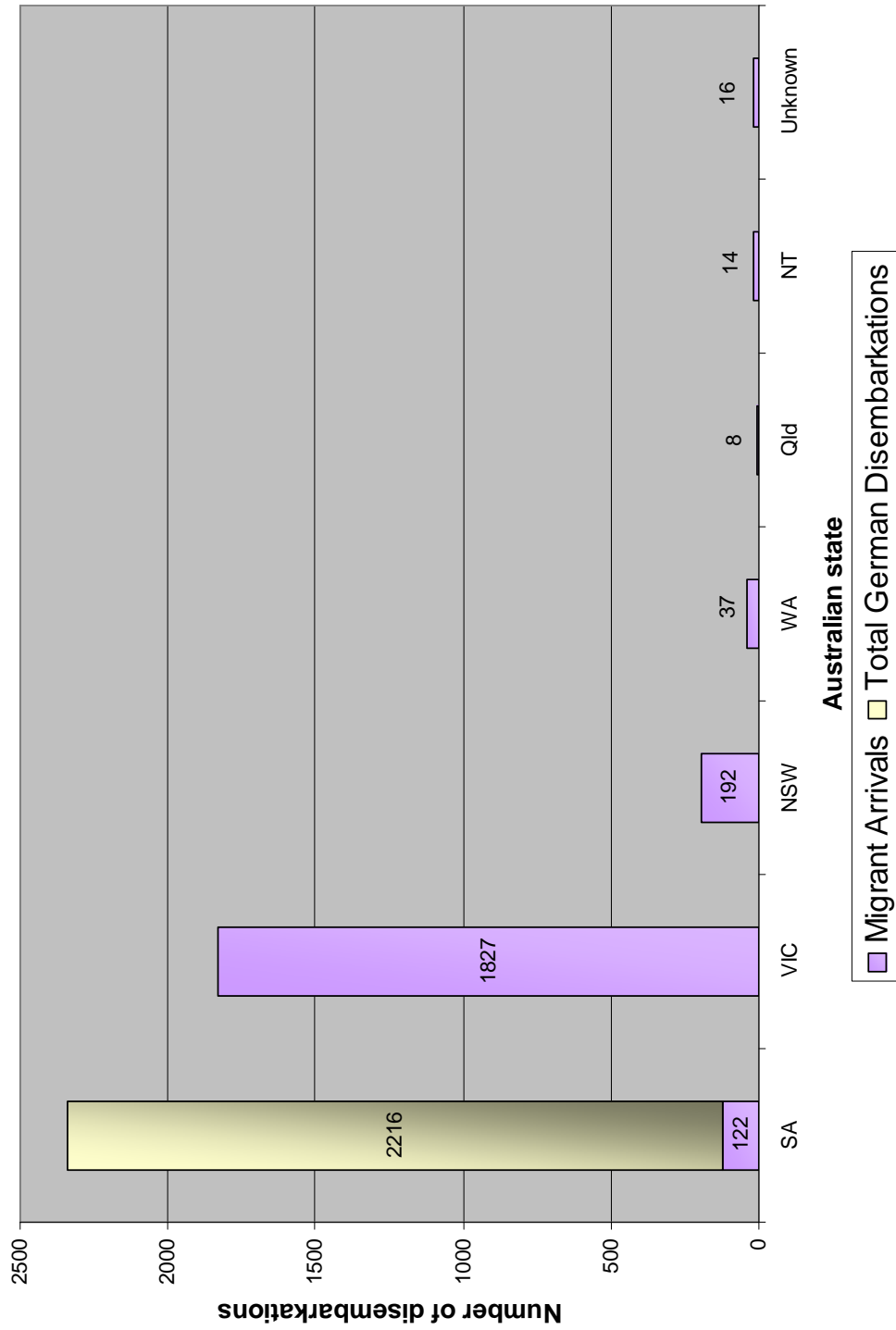


**Figure 20**  
Marital status on arrival as a percentage 1949-1965





**Figure 21**  
Married arrivals and children 1949-1965



**Figure 22**  
State of disembarkation 1949-1965

## Appendix 2

### Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Meetings, 1950 - 1957<sup>1</sup>

Meeting	Date	Year	Held	Note
11	11th August	1950	Melbourne	Meeting held Commonwealth Offices, Treasury Gardens
12	5th December	1950	Bonegilla	Joint meeting with Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council
13	19th March	1951	Melbourne	Meeting held TAA board Room
14	2-3 <sup>rd</sup> July	1951	Brisbane	Meeting held State Immigration Centre, Kangaroo Point, QLD
15	15th October	1951	Sydney	Meeting held at offices of Grand United Order of Oddfellows
16	29th February	1952	Melbourne	
17	5-6 <sup>th</sup> June	1952	Woodside	Meeting held Woodside Immigration Holding Center
18	19th September	1952	Melbourne	Meeting held Commonwealth Offices, Treasury Gardens
19	17th December	1952	Melbourne	
20	16-17th April	1953	Perth	
21	6-7 <sup>th</sup> August	1953	Sydney	Meeting held YWCA
22	26th November	1953	Jindabyne	Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme visit
23	19th March	1954	Melbourne	
24	22-23rd July	1954	Brisbane	Meeting held Cane Growers Council Room, QLD
25	9th December	1954	Melbourne	
26	24-25th March	1955	Hobart	Meeting held Wrest Point Hotel, TAS
27	7-8 <sup>th</sup> July	1955	Adelaide	Meeting held Chamber of Manufacturers Board Room, SA
28	13-14 October	1955	Melbourne	
29	5-6 <sup>th</sup> April	1956	Perth	Meeting held Palace Hotel, WA
30	26-27th July	1956	Sydney	Meeting held Rural Bank Building, NSW
31	25-26th October	1956	Melbourne	Meeting held Henty House, VIC
32	14-15 March	1957	Hobart	Meeting held Wrest Point Hotel, TAS
33	22-23 August	1957	Brisbane	Meeting held Can Growers Council Rooms, QLD
34	21-22 November	1957	Melbourne	Meeting held Treasury Gardens, VIC

<sup>1</sup> NAA: A445/1, 140/4/11 - 140/4/26; A2169/3, 1955 - 1957. Commonwealth Advisory Council Meetings (various Agenda and Minutes).

### Appendix 3.1

#### Department of Immigration, Social Welfare Section caseload statistics for South Australia, various years.

##### Number of New Cases dealt with by SA social workers 1950-1953

Nationality	1950/51	1951/52 Wilson	1952/53 Cuddihy	Total
British	10	42	29	81
CSR	57	24	23	104
Dutch	ns	66	52	118
Estonian	17	11	7	35
Hungarian	87	28	23	138
Latvian	68	45	21	134
Lithuanian	50	24	19	93
Polish	300	137	93	530
Ukrainian	97	37	30	164
Yugoslav	101	35	29	165
German	ns	14	43	57
Italian	ns	14	29	43
Others	106	46	19	171
Unknown	35	ns	ns	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>1868</b>

Problems	1950/51	1951/52	1952/53	Total
Accommodation	108	48	43	199
Adjustment	11	6	17	34
Behaviour	19	6	0	25
Child placement	14	4	3	21
Employment	196	90	76	362
Family Sep	73	27	10	110
Death	ns	0	8	8
Financial	77	9	25	111
Health	180	67	51	298
Marital	71	60	73	204
Pregnancy	37	4	2	43
Psychiatric	45	32	24	101
Misc	100	106	45	251
<b>Total</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>1767</b>

Source: NAA (ACT): A445, 276/3/4 Social Worker Annual Reports, South Australia.

**Appendix 3.2****Cuddihy's 1950/53 Case Load Statistics 1950-53**

	<b>1950*</b>	<b>1951</b>	<b>1952</b>	<b>1953*</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Interviews</b>	541	1602	1269	736	<b>4148</b>
<b>Phone Calls</b>	534	1144	992	820	<b>3490</b>
<b>New Cases</b>	192	325	213	205	<b>935</b>
<b>Brought Forward</b>	220	514	543	436	<b>1713</b>
<b>Minor Services</b>	96	583	645	326	<b>1650</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1583</b>	<b>4168</b>	<b>3662</b>	<b>2523</b>	<b>11936</b>

\*July/Dec 1950; Jan/June 1953.

Source: NAA (ACT): A445, 276/3/4 Social Worker Annual Reports, South Australia.

### Appendix 3.3

Cuddihy 1950 - 1953 caseload summary 1/7/1952 - 30/06/1953, derived from GT Cuddihy's Annual Report.

Year/Mth	Interviews	Phone calls	New Cases	B/Fwds	Minor S.	Total
<b>1950</b>						
July	38	37	22	12	4	<b>38</b>
Aug	119	147	39	64	18	<b>121</b>
Sept	172	168	40	70	30	<b>140</b>
Oct	110	144	35	51	26	<b>118</b>
Nov	39	6	18	8	7	<b>34</b>
Dec	63	32	38	15	11	<b>64</b>

1951	Interviews	Phone calls	New Cases	B/Fwds	Minor S.	Total
Jan	169	62	41	31	45	<b>117</b>
Feb	93	65	19	30	27	<b>76</b>
March	147	122	35	42	49	<b>126</b>
April	141	68	27	23	79	<b>129</b>
May	171	115	29	47	62	<b>138</b>
June	152	103	21	44	54	<b>119</b>
July	129	95	30	43	48	<b>95</b>
Aug	139	159	32	66	40	<b>146</b>
Sept	177	40	33	37	91	<b>177</b>
Oct	159	202	33	88	56	<b>177</b>
Nov	30	25	4	13	10	<b>27</b>
Dec	95	88	21	50	22	<b>93</b>

rec  
leave

1952	Interviews	Phone calls	New Cases	B/Fwds	Minor S.	Total
Jan	206	42	25	25	153	<b>203</b>
Feb	31	31	4	22	8	<b>34</b>
March	144	39	31	37	67	<b>135</b>
April	108	74	14	44	76	<b>134</b>
May	107	78	15	59	49	<b>123</b>
June	86	105	16	68	28	<b>112</b>
July	84	107	19	59	33	<b>111</b>
Aug	109	96	24	62	36	<b>122</b>
Sept	153	194	28	54	91	<b>173</b>
Oct	25	23	0	17	6	<b>23</b>
Nov	102	104	22	51	43	<b>116</b>
Dec	114	99	15	45	55	<b>115</b>

rec  
leave

1953	Interviews	Phone calls	New Cases	B/Fwds	Minor S.	Total
Jan	127	112	38	104	73	<b>215</b>
Feb	129	137	38	67	57	<b>162</b>
March	128	141	36	55	49	<b>140</b>
April	127	122	33	68	43	<b>145</b>
May	111	146	23	72	57	<b>152</b>
June	114	162	37	70	47	<b>154</b>
		820	205	436	326	

Source: NAA (ACT): A445, 276/3/4 Social worker annual reports SA.

**Appendix 4.1****NOTE:**

This appendix has been removed  
to comply with copyright regulations.  
It is included in the print copy of the thesis  
held by the University of Adelaide Library.

**Appendix 4.2**

The Migrant Database is supplied as a Microsoft Access Database on CD at the rear of this thesis. The CD can be found in a pocket on the inside back cover.



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A2567: Migrant Reception and Training Centre, Bonegilla [Victoria]; [Bonegilla migrant reception and training centre] Correspondence files, single (subject) number system with year prefix, 01 Jan 1950 - 31 Dec 1971; items:

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A2618: Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority, Head Office; Documents relating to the history of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, 01 Jan 1833 - 31 Dec 1972; 4903/4, German Tradesmen Statistics, 1951-1951.

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