

BRITISH MIGRANTS IN POST-WAR  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA: EXPECTATIONS  
AND LIVED EXPERIENCES

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# Abstract

The expectations and experiences of British migrants in South Australia between 1945 and 1982 were highly varied and in some ways have been misunderstood both by scholars and the general public. This thesis uses previously unexamined archival sources as well as new interviews conducted with British migrants to analyse the key factors that influenced migrants' expectations of Australia and experiences in South Australia.

Chapter one traces the history of immigration to the Australian continent from the start of the twentieth century until the post-war period. It examines the existing literature on the subject of British migrants' expectations and identifies important factors for understanding migrants' experiences in South Australia. It summarises existing scholarly literature which has commonly associated negative British migrant experiences with misleading publicity distributed by Australian governments in Britain but notes that this perception has not been subject to sufficient analysis.

Chapter two documents the aim of Australia's post-war governments—and specifically the Commonwealth Department of Immigration—to provide British migrants with accurate information about Australia. It reveals that a concerted effort was made to provide migrants with information that would help them successfully settle in Australia and that this information was not intended to deceive potential migrants. On the contrary, the publicity to attract and inform migrants was designed and administered by governments with positive intentions, against a background of not wanting to repeat mistakes of the past including provision of misleading information to migrants.

Chapter three analyses key variables which influence migrants' expectations, relating to migrants' backgrounds in Britain, including physical location, financial capabilities, age, gender, family structure and experiences of war. The testimony of the migrants quoted in this chapter highlights that their expectations of Australia were formed primarily by variations in the abovementioned factors. They were not built solely—or even most significantly—on the publicity to which they were exposed regarding Australia prior to migration.

Chapter four explores several locations in South Australia to which many British migrants moved in order to show the effects that those locations had on whether migrant expectations were met when settling in the State. It comparatively examines the stories of British migrants who stayed in migrant hostels and then moved to the suburban area of Glenelg or the newer 'satellite' town of Elizabeth. It demonstrates the variance in experiences that occurred based on the locations which migrants inhabited. Some migrants' experiences in the hostels were positive, while others were negative. Suburban areas like Glenelg shared commonalities with the urban environments from which most British migrants originated. Consequently, they were often easier locations for migrants to settle. Elizabeth was a new town that created polarizing views. Some migrants embraced the open spaces and lack of population density, while others were unsatisfied with it due to factors including a poor transportation system and the area being heavily populated by other British migrants.

In summary, this thesis contributes to existing literature on migrant experiences in Australia and calls for more attention to the experiences of British migrants in Australia whose triumphs and trials as migrants have sometimes been overlooked in favour of migrant groups of other various ethnicities.

# Thesis Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, 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. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

**Signed:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

# Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the creation of this thesis. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me over the last two and a half years to complete this project.

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# List of Abbreviations

ARC	Australian Research Council
DP	Displaced Person
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
NAA	National Archives of Australia
SRSA	State Records, South Australia
DOI	Department of Immigration
SAHT	South Australian Housing Trust
IPTB	Information Publicity and Tourist Bureau
BBC	British Broadcasting Commission
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
DOIN	Department of Information
ANFB	Australian National Film Board
US	United States of America
CIACPC	Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Publicity Committee
NIB	News and Information Bureau
CBD	Central Business District
DIMASS	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Statistics Section

# Introduction

The end of the Second World War heralded many changes in Australian society, but none has had greater impact on the country than the call to “populate or perish”, as articulated by Arthur Calwell on 2 August 1945, as the country’s new and first Minister for Immigration. For close to forty years following this statement, Australia vigorously pursued and obtained higher numbers of immigrants than at any other point in its history as either a federated nation or collection of separate British colonies. This thesis examines the expectations and the lived experiences of British migrants in South Australia in the post-World War Two period from 1945 to 1982, when Australia stopped offering assisted passages and moved to a skill based migration program. It shows how expectations and aspirations impacted on the overall outcomes of British migrant journeys when compared with what they actually experienced upon arrival in South Australia.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis contributes to the recording for posterity of the experiences had by British migrants in South Australia so that the stories of this important group within South Australian and Australian history is not lost for future generations, and also is available for further examination by those interested in South Australia’s relationship with Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This thesis makes an important contribution to the scholarship on this topic because it addresses several gaps that are present within the narrative of British post-war migration experiences in Australia. It is also an important contribution to the deeper contextualisation of migrants’ experiences of South Australia within the national narrative of post-war migration and enhances our knowledge of the important but not sufficiently acknowledged role played by migrant hostels within the history of post-war migration experiences and outcomes in Australia.

This introductory section includes a discussion of the methodologies used to conduct the research for this thesis. The introduction is followed by four main chapters, each of which analyses different aspects of the experiences of British migrants that migrated to South Australia in the post-war period.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘migration journey’ is used as a way of describing a migrant’s entire immigration experience, from his/her first thoughts about the possibility of migrating through to his/her eventual settlement and establishment of a life in a new country or return to his/her home country.



The first chapter of the thesis begins with a broad, though by no means all-encompassing, introduction to the history of immigration policy and practices in Australia since Federation in 1901. It outlines the major developments in immigration policy throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and briefly analyses some of the most prominent aspects of immigration policy and practices in Australia during the post-war period. It gives a sense of the events and times that were most relevant to migration in Australia prior to and during the post-war period, providing the reader with the context of Australian immigration history before moving into an analysis of the scholarly literature surrounding those times and events.

Having established the context for this thesis, the first chapter provides an analysis of the scholarly literature in relation to post-war immigration and migrant stories. It examines the available texts which discuss the expectations and the experiences of British migrants in Australia and South Australia. It identifies the themes of wealth, gender, living conditions and the details about the locations from which migrants came as important factors impacting migrants' expectations and experiences, as shown by the existing scholarly literature.<sup>2</sup> It establishes that most of the literature regarding British post-war immigration does not sufficiently address the expectations and experiences of British migrants in Australia, nor does it provide more than brief explanations (with exceptions, such as *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants* by James Hammerton and Alistair Thomson, 2006) of the reasons why these expectations were formed. It also identifies the negative perceptions that exist in some migrants' opinions of the Australian publicity from this period, which have erroneously been reinforced by some of the scholarly literature on the subject. It shows the need to examine the environments that migrants settled in South Australia in comparison with environments that they left in Britain in order to gain a deeper and more adequate understanding of the factors influencing their expectations of South Australia and their subsequent experiences. These shortcomings are identified as the areas to which this thesis will contribute in order to expand scholarly knowledge pertaining to British migration to Australia in the post-war period.

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<sup>2</sup> The theme of where a migrant came from refers to what type of environment they inhabited in Britain. It encompasses factors such as physical surroundings, wealth, gender and family structure rather than assuming that all British people came from the same 'British' environment as some previous scholarly literature has tended to do.

Chapter two addresses the publicity and other information displayed and distributed by the Australian Government in post-war Britain. It assesses the publicity's impact on the formation of migrants' expectations of Australia. It argues that the publicity that has regularly been derided by migrants and scholarly works for being deceptive and/or inaccurate in most cases contained the most relevant and up-to-date information that was available, and that the Australian Government did everything in its power to provide migrants with accurate and sufficient information. It does not deny that in some cases migrants may have gained inaccurate information, but shows that this was largely due to forces outside the government's control, such as rapidly changing economic conditions in Australia and Britain. Furthermore, it argues that in many cases, British migrants who felt let down by Australia in comparison to its publicity could have had more realistic expectations of Australia if they had engaged with more/all of the information available to them, rather than allowing the flashy and enticing publicity which they saw to form their expectations.

Chapter three of this thesis addresses the impact that migrants' backgrounds had on their decisions to migrate and shows that the environments from which migrants came was a far more critical factor in defining their perceptions of their migration experiences than the publicity with which they interacted. It explores factors that influenced migrant expectations such as their physical environments, gender, age, experiences of war and financial situations. It argues that migrants' expectations were predominantly influenced by and based upon the environments with which they were accustomed, rather than the publicity which they saw. Furthermore, it shows that these factors played an important role in making potential migrants inclined to interact with the migration publicity and information made available to them by Australian migration officials.

The fourth chapter examines the environments to which migrants came in South Australia and argues they were just as vital in determining the outcome of migration experiences as the environments which the migrants left behind. It shows that there was huge diversity in the experiences that British migrants had during the period of their initial settlement in Australia, and that migrants' perceptions of the country and of being deceived by publicity was heavily influenced by the locations into which they settled upon arrival. Through several examples, it analyses different types of locations in which migrants lived on arrival in South Australia. It notes differences in variables

such as the availability of public services including transport, health and education; whether migrants went to isolated or developed areas; and the effects on those who lived in migrant hostels for a long period of time. To reinforce these points, the chapter compares Elizabeth, a ‘satellite’ town that was established in 1955 and populated predominantly by British migrants in the post-war era, with Glenelg, a long-established area that was highly developed and existed within the urban sprawl of Adelaide by the beginning of the post-war period. Elizabeth was selected not only because it is one of the icons of immigration-related development in Australia from that period, but primarily because the migrants who populated it found themselves inhabiting an environment that was very different from the more typical experiences of other migrants, who moved into one of the suburbs of the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Finally, the conclusion summarises the main arguments and points made in this thesis. It demonstrates how this thesis has added to and improved upon the existing scholarship regarding British migrants in South Australia between 1945 and 1982.

# Methodology

The topic of this research was first conceptualised after the differences between migrant expectations and lived experiences were identified by members of the Hostel Stories Project as an important area to be addressed through scholarly work.<sup>1</sup> Hostel Stories is an Australian Research Council (ARC) project being undertaken as a joint initiative by the Migration Museum of South Australia and the University of Adelaide and is supported by the Cities of Charles Sturt and Port Adelaide Enfield, the Vietnamese community's South Australian branch and State Records of South Australia (SRSA). It aims to compare the experiences of migrants from various cultural backgrounds who stayed in different South Australian hostels as well as comparing their experiences over time. As a result of this focus on hostels, the majority of the migrants who were interviewed or whose words and opinions in some way contribute to this work have the common link of having been accommodated in a government operated migrant hostel.<sup>2</sup>

Oral history is a well-established form of research for social historians, and has been used widely in the field of Australian immigration history. Interviews provide insights that are lacking from more traditional sources and can act as a critique of those sources. They can also fill in the numerous gaps that appear in historical research when other available sources are either incomplete or lack the detail to be used as conclusive pieces of evidence.<sup>3</sup> The literature that exists in relation to the topic of this thesis uses oral histories frequently as a source for data, specifically because it fills in the numerous gaps that exist in the history of post-war migration experiences. Interviews

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<sup>1</sup> The Hostel Stories project team consisted of Karen Agutter, Daniella Pilla, Rachel Ankeny, Catherine Manning and myself. Each of these people was involved in some of the oral history interviews I conducted for this research as well as others they did for themselves. Daniella and Karen in particular also collaborated with and aided me in the finding and collection of the archival materials needed to create this thesis, though in every case, sources that contributed to this thesis were personally examined.

<sup>2</sup> Migrant hostel is the term used to refer to the various forms of accommodation provided to newly arrived migrants by both Commonwealth and State governments in Australia between 1945 and 1982. Other names for accommodation that have been included under this umbrella term are Work Camps and Migrant Reception and Training Depots/Camps.

<sup>3</sup> Beth M. Robertson, *Oral History Handbook* (Adelaide: Printak Pty Ltd, 1995), 3; Anthony Seldon, *Contemporary History* Anthony Seldon, ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988), 8.

can also provide a sense of the mood and feelings of a series of events or period of time that cannot be gained from textual sources alone. The use of interviews is particularly useful to this thesis as it shows how Australia's post-war migrants reacted to advertising material and how their experience of life in Australia compared with the expectations they had gained prior to their arrival. Oral history is also a method of recording the histories of persons who were previously voiceless. It provides an avenue to those who would argue that historical records misrepresent a story or particular facts as it relates to them. Another advantage of interviewing the people to whom the research relates is the clarification they can provide. In many circumstances oral history can be used to verify ideas or facts that have already been discovered through documentation and thus can reinforce the validity of that documentation as a source, such as those migrants interviewed for this project who commented on the helpful information they received prior to leaving Britain, which supported the claims of members of the Department of Immigration (DOI) that were discovered in archival sources.<sup>4</sup>

Critics of oral history argue that memory is not a reliable resource for making historical conclusions, particularly in a project such as this where the majority of the interviews have been conducted with the elderly. However, it is known that memory loss in old age primarily effects short term memories, rather than the memory of events from the period this thesis engages with. Furthermore, people tend to forget what they regard as insignificant details, whilst they retain accurately the memory of events that they consider to have been important and or had an impact on their lives.<sup>5</sup> Alistair Thomson demonstrates in *Moving Stories* (2011) the transformative and beneficial effect that the passage of time can have on the use of an oral history as a source. When discussing the memories of Joan Pickett, Thomson outlines how the passage of time changed the way she recalled a particular event in the interview he conducted with her as opposed to how she recalled it in her diary— written within hours of the event taking place forty years earlier. Whilst importantly the facts of the story (about leaving her hometown of Manchester on the first leg of her journey to Australia) are not altered, the aspects of the story she focuses on have changed. The 1960 diary entry is focused on the anxieties of a young woman setting out into the unknown, whereas the oral history

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony Seldon and Joanna Pappworth, *By Word of Mouth: 'Elite' Oral History* (London: Methuen, 1983), 44.

<sup>5</sup> Robertson, *Oral History*, 4; Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History, Third Edition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), 131.

recorded in 2000 focuses on the regret of having left behind her beloved father whom she never saw again. Despite the fact that Joan was recalling the same event in both instances, the passage of time shifted the emphasis of her story. It created an altered version of the same event which shed new light on the significance of particular experiences that occur as part of a migrant's journey and showed that what a person considers to be important is influenced by the passage of time.<sup>6</sup>

When conducting research for this thesis, a standardised process was adhered to both for selecting candidates for interviews and deciding what to ask them during their interviews in order to eliminate some of the potential drawbacks of oral history. Candidates for interviews were chosen from amongst the migrants who had voluntarily responded to the Hostel Stories Project's call for migrants that had stayed in South Australia's hostels. Migrants who responded filled out a registration questionnaire that asked them basic questions about their migration experiences, such as when and where they were born, why they came to Australia, what hostel/s they stayed in and at what time and whether or not they would be willing to be interviewed for the project. By reviewing these responses, each member of the project's team was able to select migrants they wished to interview in line with answering their own research questions, which led to interview targets being selected on the basis of their nationality, a specific hostel or a specific period of arrival in South Australia. In the case of this thesis, only British migrants were considered, and those that made reference to remembering or being pleased or unsatisfied with Australia's publicity were the ones that were approached to be interviewed. Migrants who spoke of having settled in either Elizabeth or Glenelg were also selected in order to make enquiries about the differences between settling in a new town as opposed to an established area, which is discussed in the fourth chapter. Priority was also given to older migrants due to the likelihood of their being involved in their own or their family's decision to come to Australia

The script of questions used in the interview process was created in slightly different versions for migrants who had stayed at a hostel as opposed to migrants or other members of the public who had worked at a hostel. The interviews that were relevant to this thesis were all conducted with migrants that were hostel residents, so only the first script was required. The script evolved over the life of the project. At the

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<sup>6</sup> Alistair Thomson, *Moving Stories: An Intimate history of Four Women across Two Countries* (UNSW Press, Sydney, 2011), 295, 296.

beginning, questions included related to migrants' journeys to Australia, and their experiences in the hostels. Though these questions were never removed from the interviews, in time other questions were added to more specifically target the questions being researched by the various team members. In the case of interviews conducted specifically for this thesis, questions regarding the locations and conditions migrants came from in Britain were added, as well as questions about their lives in Australia after they moved out of the hostels and into areas such as Elizabeth and Glenelg. Interviewees were allowed to answer the questions in the manner they saw fit. Some preferred to go through the questions in a step by step manner and required prompting to make them talk about specific issues. Others however, were happy to simply launch into their personal story and sometimes required guidance from the interviewers to bring them back to addressing the topics that were relevant to each team members' research interests. It was usual for each interview to last for approximately one hour. However, some interviews went for just forty minutes, whilst others took more than two hours to complete. The script used in all interviews conducted for the Hostel Stories Project was approved by and had ethics clearance granted by the Higher Research Ethics Council of the University of Adelaide, in accordance with the requirements of the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and in compliance with the *Privacy Act 1998*.<sup>7</sup>

Seventeen interviews containing the stories of twenty-three migrants (some interviews were conducted with multiple interviewees) were conducted for this thesis. Fifteen of them are quoted directly. Fifteen of these interviews which include twenty of the interviewees were conducted by members of the Hostel Stories team.<sup>8</sup> Two others interviews were directly quoted from the University of Sussex's British-Australian Post-war Migration Research Project. More than thirty interviews with British migrants were accessed and analysed from this collection, however it was decided only to include direct material from two of those interviews as the interviewees both came to Adelaide when they migrated to Australia before returning to Britain. This allowed the

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<sup>7</sup> The ethics approval number for "Hostel Stories: toward a richer narrative of the lived experiences of migrants" is H-2012-120.

<sup>8</sup> All the interviews conducted for this thesis and others created by members of the Hostel Stories team of Migration Museum volunteers working with the project are available from the State Library of South Australia in audio format as well as with an accompanying transcript.

thesis to maintain its focus on migrants experiences in South Australia. Many other interviews with post-war migrants were conducted by the Hostel Stories team that improved the knowledge that informed this thesis; however only those interviews that directly related to the questions this thesis seeks to answer were used to construct the arguments. Of those interviews that were conducted with British migrants, most were conducted with people who came from urban environments in Britain such as London, Liverpool and Glasgow. Twelve of the interviewees were female and ten male. They represented many different age brackets at the time of migration from children less than ten years of age to teenagers, young single adults, married adults and couples with children. They stayed at many of South Australia's hostels including Finsbury/Pennington, Gepps Cross, Smithfield and Glenelg and in some cases stayed in more than one or had brief stays at interstate hostels before arriving in South Australia. The interviews conducted also covered the majority of the post-war time span, with some interviewees having arrived in South Australia in the late 1940s through to others who came in the 1970s. When combined with other primary and secondary sources, these interviews create a detailed and interesting account of the experiences of British migrants in post-war South Australia. Furthermore, the opinions of these migrants regarding topics of interest in this thesis such as interaction with publicity, experiences before migrating in Britain and their perceptions of the conditions they settled into in South Australia help to show parts of the British migration experience in South Australia that have not previously been brought to light.

The migrants who responded to the invitation to share their migration histories with the Hostel Stories Project team and were subsequently interviewed for the purposes of this thesis were equally as likely to have had negative experiences regarding Australia's publicity in Britain as they were positive. They were also equally likely to have had positive or negative experiences settling in South Australia. On the questionnaire that all migrants who participated in the Hostel Stories Project completed, they were asked questions about their experiences that in some cases prompted them to give answers that related to the aspects of their experiences that were of interest to the Hostel Stories researchers. The question: "Where did you move to directly after leaving the hostel? (Type of accommodation and location)" was included in order to find migrants who went to specific areas of interest for this thesis such as hostels including Gepps Cross, Pennington, Elder Park and Rosewater. Or who settled in areas of interest



to this research after their time in the hostels such as in Elizabeth and Glenelg. No indication was given on the form that migrants from certain areas were preferred or more likely to be invited to record an oral history. Furthermore, migrants were not directly asked on the questionnaire about their experiences with publicity and information about Australia in Britain. Whenever information on this subject was present in a migrant's responses to the questions asked it was volunteered information. This not only shows that migrants were not encouraged to over emphasize the importance that publicity played in the forming of their expectations of Australia and their experiences in it but that those who did mention it considered it to be an important part of their personal history.

This thesis makes regular use of primary sources from archival collections. The use of material from government archives in this thesis has allowed the investigations regarding how Australian governments attracted migrants from Britain as well as how they sought to shape their expectations to take place. The documents revealed insights into the history of post-war immigration that could not be garnered from the migrants who were interviewed for this research. In particular, chapter two relies heavily on these documents as source material in order to arrive at its' conclusions pertaining to the activities, intentions and motivations of staff from the DOI. Archival sources are often incomplete in terms of the range of documents that were kept on specific topics or from a particular time period on inquiry, In the course of this research however, a lack of record keeping was not an issue. The records held at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) are extensive and date back to the creation of the DOI, which is the body that the majority of the documents used to inform this thesis relate.

Over the course of the research period, many files were examined from the NAA and SRSA. The types of series examined from the NAA included; DOI correspondence files, DOI correspondence files specific to British immigrants and Department of Information correspondence files. At SRSA, files examined included those from the South Australian agency—the State Tourist Bureau and its successors—that liaised with the federal immigration department on matters relating to the migration publicity campaign and the settlement of British migrants in South Australia as well as documents produced by the South Australian Government established South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT).

Most of these primary sources were located in the Canberra office of the NAA. Early in the life of this project, Hostel Stories team member Karen Agutter made a trip to Canberra where she acquired and photographed approximately twenty different files that formed the starting point for further searching in the NAA's collections. Later in the research period for this project, another research trip to the Canberra office of the NAA was undertaken by the author. During this week long trip, over 6300 pages of documents were photographed to be taken back to Adelaide, where they were thoroughly analysed and sorted into a coherent narrative that forms much of the basis of this thesis. Most of the documents that were examined are not directly referred to in the thesis and some turned out not to be relevant to its specific topics of inquiry. However, it was necessary to examine them all in order to ensure accuracy in the arguments made as a result of this research, and the knowledge gained via the examination of those documents that were relevant but are not specifically referred to in this thesis only enhanced the authority with which the arguments of this thesis were able to be asserted.<sup>9</sup> Every effort was made to ensure that the research undertaken for this thesis was as thorough as possible. The current members of the Hostel Stories team as well as others who were previously involved in the project have reviewed and analysed huge amounts of archival material and have always shared relevant pieces of information with the other team members to ensure that the project's research as a whole was conducted to the highest standard possible.

Some of the files, including those that were used in this thesis, were previously unexamined, and therefore can be confirmed as being new sources of information for the topics analysed in this thesis. Unexamined files from the NAA include; *Abbery H.H. and Family-return to UK*, *British Servicemen- Distribution of Australian Information Literature* and *Chichester Plan of Migration from U.K. to British Dominions*. The information contained within them was vital for informing the arguments and conclusions presented in this thesis, particularly in relation to the operation of Australia's post-war publicity campaign in Britain. The files that showed the work being put into the publicity campaign by the DOI in the 1940s and 1950s were

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<sup>9</sup> The research of various members of the Hostel Stories team has confirmed that a large volume of documentary evidence that would likely have been relevant to migrant hostels has been destroyed. It is not known if there would have been additional evidence from these files that would have influenced the analysis of the topics addressed in this thesis.

particularly fascinating. They provided a great depth of detail about how the department pursued accuracy in the information it gave to migrants and the lengths to which it went not only to convince migrants to come to Australia but also to ensure that their journey and settlement in Australia were as smooth and painless as possible. They revealed many facts about the DOI and other government agencies activities in the post-war period that the existing scholarship lacks in relation to migration publicity and information given to British migrants.

Other forms of migrant testimony including personal memoirs and collections of migrants' stories put together in published texts were also consulted, in order to achieve the widest possible range of thoughts and opinions on the questions addressed by this research. Many scholarly works also contributed to the contents of this thesis. Among these texts, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's invisible migrants*, is recognised as the seminal text dealing with British post-war migration to Australia. It is a highly valuable text, and though this thesis points out inconsistencies within it and improves upon the work of this text in some areas, it also regularly refers to it, as it is the most authoritative source of scholarly information for the topics this thesis seeks to address. Other important texts that inform this thesis include works by James Jupp, Reginald Appleyard and Mark Peel. All of these as well as many others are discussed in greater detail in this thesis' literature review.

# Chapter One: Background to Twentieth Century Australian Immigration and Literature Review

## Historical Background

The following section briefly outlines the major developments that occurred in regards to Australian immigration in the twentieth century and shows how these events led to the establishment and evolution of the post-war migration program and the use of hostels to accommodate migrants. It focuses on developments in policy and practices that had particular impacts on British migrants that settled in South Australia and who are the focus of this thesis. More than a million British migrants came to Australia between 1945 and 1982, accounting for approximately forty two percent of all post-war migrant and refugee arrivals until 1971.<sup>10</sup> More than ninety percent of British immigrants to Australia came via assisted passages and many of these stayed in government-run temporary migrant accommodation upon arrival.<sup>11</sup> A high proportion of British migrants came to reside in Adelaide and South Australia in relativity to Australia's more populated states. In 1971 British migrants accounted for over fifteen percent of Adelaide's population, in comparison to Sydney and Melbourne where British migrants accounted for approximately 7-8 percent of those cities populations.<sup>12</sup> These immigrants have contributed greatly to the makeup of contemporary South Australia and Australia at large. They have done so not only through their numbers and the ever-increasing amount of descendants they have produced but also through their

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<sup>10</sup> "Post World War Two British Migration to Australia", Museum Victoria, accessed 17/06/2015, <http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/themes/13640/post-world-war-ii-british-migration-to-australia.>: I.H Burnley, "British Immigration and Settlement in Australian Cities 1947-1971", *International Migration Review*, Vol 12, Issue 3, (1978) 341; The Changing Face of Modern Australia 1950s to 1970s, Australian Government, accessed 3/11/2015,

<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/changing-face-of-modern-australia-1950s-to-1970s>

<sup>11</sup> Burnley, "British Immigration and Settlement in Australian Cities" 342.

<sup>12</sup> Burnley, "British Immigration and Settlement in Australian Cities", 344.

many contributions to Australian society. Their experiences as British migrants to Australia are the focus of this thesis.

Immigration is central to the story of Australia. The country is seen by the rest of the world as primarily a white nation of British heritage that has come to embrace various ethnicities into its culture, and has formed a modern, wealthy and tolerant multicultural society. The indigenous population is a tiny minority within the general population of immigrants and the descendants of immigrants.<sup>13</sup> Australia has existed as a nation since 1 January 1901. Ever since that date, immigration to one of the world's largest and most sparsely populated nations has held a position of importance in Australian political debate and the national consciousness. During different periods since 1901, state and federal governments as well as the wider population have both welcomed and spurned new arrivals to Australia's shores. The history of immigration to the Australian nation is complex and constantly evolving as the factors that influence people's views on immigration change from year to year.

The position of the first parliament of Australia was highly restrictive regarding immigration from any nation other than Great Britain. The first act to pass the Australian Parliament was the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*.<sup>14</sup> This law was enacted in order to maintain the British ethnic identity and racial homogeneity of the newly federated nation.<sup>15</sup> The new federal law reflected the long-standing policies of the six former British colonies that formed the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

Although they had formed their own nation in 1901, Australians still identified themselves both politically and publicly as being a strong outpost of the British Empire and civilisation. The six colonies passed a variety of laws in the second half of the nineteenth century that reflected the growing animosity amongst the British-born and descendant population toward the various non-British migrants that were entering the

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<sup>13</sup> "Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991-2006-Australia", ABS, accessed 8/9/2009, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/744FB2E9312BC13CCA25762A001CBA54?opendocument>.

<sup>14</sup> James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera-The Story of Australian Immigration*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

<sup>15</sup> John Lack and Jacqueline Templeton, ed., *Sources of Australian Immigration History 1901-1945*, vol. 1 (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, 1988), 1.

continent.<sup>16</sup> These sentiments grew more prevalent as the nineteenth century gold rushes ended. The British population of Australia believed that the non-British immigrants who had arrived seeking gold were responsible for the high unemployment and generally poor economic conditions that prevailed throughout the colonies for the latter half of nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

Immigration was one of the factors that influenced the Australian population to vote in favour of creating a federation.<sup>18</sup> As a result of the six different colonies having six different sets of laws regarding immigration, it was possible for migrants to enter the Australian continent via one colony and move to another, thus circumventing laws that would have prohibited them landing at their intended colony via ship.<sup>19</sup> The *Chinese Immigration Act of 1855* in Victoria and the *Pacific Islands Labourers Act of 1880* in Queensland are examples of the restrictive and sometimes ineffective laws passed by individual Australian colonies regarding restricting immigration. Due to the lack of uniformity amongst the different colonies laws, the problem of keeping out undesired immigrants continued to frustrate them. Addressing this problem was a primary factor in the almost immediate adoption of the *Immigration Restriction Act* upon the federation of the colonies in 1901.<sup>20</sup> The *Immigration Restriction Act* formed the backbone of Australian immigration policy for half a century. This act, along with others such as the *Migration Act of 1958* and the way in which they were administered, formed the basis for what came to be known as the ‘White Australia Policy’.<sup>21</sup> The term ‘White Australia’ does not refer to an official policy. Rather, it describes the nature and

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<sup>16</sup> Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land, Australia's Post-War Immigration* (Leichhardt, New South Wales: Pluto Press Australia, 1991), 20.

<sup>17</sup> Immigration Information Branch of the Australian Information Service, *1788-1975: Australia and Immigration* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing, 1975), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Kathryn Cronin, “Controlling Immigration: Australian Legislation and Practice”, *Australian Law Reform Commission-Reform Journal*, vol. 19, issue 75 (1999).

<sup>19</sup> “Chinese Immigration Act 1855”, Museum of Australian Democracy, accessed 7/5/2013, <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-82.html>; Cronin, “Controlling Immigration”.

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (Cambridge: The University of Cambridge, 1999), 143.

<sup>21</sup> Julia Martinez, “The End of Indenture? Asian Workers in the Australian Pearlring Industry, 190–1972”, *International Labour and Working-Class History*, vol. 67, issue April (2005): 126; Statistics Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMASS), *Immigration: Federation to Century's End 1901–2000* (Canberra: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2001), 1; Jupp, *Woomera*, 9; Australian Information Service, *Australia and Immigration*, 3.

intentions of Australia's policies regarding migration throughout the early and mid-twentieth century.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Australia experienced periods of both high and low rates of immigration. From Federation until the outbreak of the First World War the country enjoyed a strong economic period. This resulted in a high rate of immigration and greater tolerance being shown toward immigration as the country's population expanded by close to a million people during this period, 400,000 of whom were immigrants who overwhelmingly came from Great Britain.<sup>22</sup> The onset of war brought a halt to immigration and led to the re-emergence of the anti-migration sentiments that already existed in the country, but had been subdued by the pre-war economic prosperity. However, the end of the war and the returning prosperity in its wake once again led to a large immigration intake. During the period from 1921 to 1929 over 300,000 immigrants arrived.<sup>23</sup> Over half of these received assistance from the Australian Government in conjunction with the British Government, which had adopted the Empire Settlement Scheme. This scheme was designed to assist the movement of peoples from Great Britain to its overseas dominions.<sup>24</sup>

Following the collapse of the Wall Street Stock Exchange in 1929, Australia entered a period of severe economic depression as did much of the Western world. The Depression years saw the flow of immigrants to the country fall to almost zero. For the first time the Australian Government chose to prevent the arrival of white skinned non-British subjects, who had previously been able to enter the country freely based on their skin colour.<sup>25</sup> These conditions prevailed until the outbreak of the Second World War, at which point virtually all immigration was stopped, including the limited resettlement of refugees from Nazi Germany that Australia accepted prior to the war's outbreak.

### **Post-war Migration and 'White Australia'**

The Second World War had a transformative effect on the psyche of the Australian Government and its people. The unexpected successes of Japan in South-East Asia and

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<sup>22</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 2.

<sup>24</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Jupp, *Woomera*, 14.

particularly its bombing of Darwin brought fear of an Asian invasion in the future to levels previously unexperienced in Australia.<sup>26</sup> This fear, coupled with the knowledge that Britain could no longer protect Australia effectively (it had lost its territories, military capabilities and prestige in the Asian war theatre during the conflict), resulted in enthusiasm for large-scale immigration as a method of addressing the country's lack of defensive capabilities.<sup>27</sup>

In 1945 Arthur Calwell was appointed as the first minister of the DOI, which was created in order to address Australia's desire for immigrants in the post-war period.<sup>28</sup> During this time he made famous the phrase "populate or perish". This slogan captured the essence of Australia's post-war immigration policy. Calwell aimed to increase Australia's population whilst maintaining the cultural homogeneity of its society.<sup>29</sup> Assisted migration was once again seen as the best way to entice migrants to come to Australia from Great Britain. The Government hoped to increase the number of arrivals to the point where immigration would contribute an extra one percent to the total Australian population on a yearly basis while another one percent would be born in Australia.<sup>30</sup> Free passages from Britain were implemented in 1946 for the servicemen of the Second World War and their dependents.<sup>31</sup> Assisted passage fares for other British migrants also began in 1946. Assisted passage migration required adult migrants to contribute just ten pounds toward the cost of their passage to Australia. Consequently, these migrants went on to become known as 'Ten Pound Poms'.<sup>32</sup> Over the next few years, free passages were extended to the servicemen of Australia's other World War Two allies. In 1947 the Government began to remove some of the restrictions placed upon non-European immigrants by granting them permanent residency after they had

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<sup>26</sup> James Jupp, *Immigration*, second ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 102.

<sup>27</sup> "Populate or Perish", *Time*, vol. 60, issue 6 (1952): 38.

<sup>28</sup> Macintyre, *History of Australia*, 198.

<sup>29</sup> Gwenda Tavan, "Leadership: Arthur Calwell and the Post-War Immigration Program", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 58, issue 2 (2012): 208.

<sup>30</sup> "About the Department-Immigration History", DOI and Citizenship, accessed 2/5/2013, <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/anniversary/immigration-history-1956-1965.htm>; Jock Collins, "The Changing Political Economy of Australian Immigration", *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, vol. 97, issue 1 (2006): 8.

<sup>31</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Jupp, *Immigration*, 92.



lived in the country for a period of at least fifteen years.<sup>33</sup> During 1947 Australia also agreed to resettle Displaced Persons (DPs) from Europe that were currently living in refugee camps throughout Europe under the care of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). In total, 170,000 DPs came to Australia with two year work contracts to fulfil under this agreement.<sup>34</sup> This sudden shift in policy that had previously excluded non-whites and the non-British was brought about due to the Government's failure to reach its intended immigration target from British migrants alone.<sup>35</sup> It was not until 1952 that the Government first allowed non-European immigrants to enter. As a result eight hundred refugees from outside Europe entered Australia in that year.<sup>36</sup>

During 1952 unemployment in Australia rose significantly. However, in this case, the unemployment rate did not adversely affect the numbers of immigrants allowed into the country.<sup>37</sup> Instead it affected the selection process for different types of immigrants, reflecting the dissatisfaction that high unemployment created regarding low-skilled immigrants and large scale immigration. The Government began to shy away from migrants with specific skills who were often single young men and instead attempted to attract more families.<sup>38</sup> This type of policy reflected the effect that the Second World War had on the Australian consciousness. The fear of invasion from the north remained so strong that the usual practice of cancelling assisted migration during poor economic periods did not occur. It was also in this year that the agreement to bring out DPs from Europe's refugee camps was terminated. However, this policy change was a reflection upon the dwindling numbers of people living in the camps, and not an indication that Australia was trying to slow down immigration. The Australian Government was anxious to secure a continued supply of migrants, leading them to sign migration agreements with many European nations over the next few years. They began predominantly with western European countries but in time extended these agreements to southern and eastern European nations.

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<sup>33</sup> "About the Department-Immigration History".

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Markus, "Labour and Immigration 1946-1949: The Displaced Persons Program", *Labour History*, vol. 47, issue November (1984): 83; Jupp, *Immigration*, 105.

<sup>35</sup> Charles Price, "Australian Immigration: 1947-73", *International Migration Review*, vol. 9, issue 3 (1975): 307.

<sup>36</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> DIMASS, *Immigration: Federation to Century's End*, 5.

During the post-war period, it was the stated objective of the Australian Commonwealth Government that ninety percent of the country's new immigrants would be British in keeping with the 'White Australia Policy' that the Government had intended to uphold.<sup>39</sup> However, this target proved impossible to achieve in the first years after the war, due to the lack of shipping available for transporting migrants from Britain, as well as competition for migrants from other British dominions.<sup>40</sup> From the 1960s onwards it became increasingly difficult for the Government to secure its desired immigration targets from Britain as living standards there improved and the British, no longer hampered by the austerity measures of the immediate post-war period, lost many of the typical motivations for migration. The decline in numbers of British migrants over the years contributed to the dismantling of the 'White Australia Policy'. This process, which took many years began with the acceptance of European refugees and the conclusion of migration agreements with European and non-European countries, and was finally dismantled entirely by the Whitlam Government in 1973.<sup>41</sup>

British migrants went to every state in Australia, but their settlement patterns were arguably more structured in South Australia than in the other states. South Australian post-war governments deliberately pursued British migrants to populate the newly expanding industrial areas to the north and south of Adelaide, including areas such as Elizabeth, Salisbury and Noarlunga. The SAHT had more significant involvement in the settlement and housing of British migrants than did any other state housing authority in Australia.<sup>42</sup> The SAHT took part in at least three different schemes directly designed to attract migrants from Britain and in some case European countries to these new areas. This resulted in very significant populations of British migrants settling on the northern and southern fringes of Adelaide. By 1971, some sections of Elizabeth, which had been established in 1955, had a British born population of over

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Tierney, "Migrants and Class in Post-War Australia", in *Class and Conflict in Australia*, ed. Rick Kuhn and Tom O'Lincoln (Melbourne: Longman Australia, 1996), 96.

<sup>40</sup> "Competition for Migrants, Canadian Paper on Calwell's Work", *The West Australian*, 16/7/1947, 10.

<sup>41</sup> Gwenda Tavan, "The Dismantling of the White Australia Policy: Elite Conspiracy or Will of the Australian People", *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, issue 1 (2004): 122; Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2008), 252.

<sup>42</sup> Burnley, "British Immigration and Settlement in Australian Cities, 342.

seventy percent, whilst almost all parts of the Elizabethan region had populations that were over fifty percent British born.<sup>43</sup>

## **Hostels**

More than four million people migrated to Australia between 1945 and 1982.<sup>44</sup> Migrant hostels provide a common link of experiences for many of the migrants who settled in Australia from the end of the Second World War until the end of the assisted passage period in 1982. The migrant hostels had many different forms and names such as Migrant Centre, Migrant Hostel, Migrant Camp, Reception and Training Centre, Holding Centre or Work Camp. The hostels were initially set up to accommodate migrants who were DPs and government-sponsored British migrants in the mid to late 1940s.

Australia accepted approximately seventeen percent of the one million DPs that the IRO resettled after the war.<sup>45</sup> In the case of the DPs, it was usual for them to be temporarily placed in one of the larger hostels such as Bonegilla in Victoria, Bathurst in New South Wales or Finsbury (later Pennington) in South Australia, before sometimes being moved to other accommodation, in order to fulfil their two-year work contracts. When the pool of refugees seeking resettlement dissipated, the assisted migration agreements which Australia had created with many European countries ensured that a steady flow of assisted migrants continued to use hostels as their first accommodation upon arrival in Australia. The assisted passage agreements allowed the Government to continue to meet its immigration targets, which could not be satisfied by British immigrants alone. Migrants typically lived in the hostels until they were able to move into their own homes, or transferred to a different hostel in order to gain employment with nearby companies.

Most of the early hostels were on the sites of former army barracks and other military sites that were no longer being used by the Australian armed forces. As the

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<sup>43</sup> Burnley, "British Immigration and Settlement in Australian Cities, 349.

<sup>44</sup> 1945 marks the beginning of the assisted passage period in which communal accommodation was used for housing government sponsored migrants. It extends to 1982 when Australia stopped offering assisted passages to all migrants.

<sup>45</sup> Edward Marks, "Internationally Assisted Migration: ICEM Rounds Out Five Years of Resettlement", *International Organization*, vol. 11, issue 3 (1957): 483.

number of migrants needing accommodation grew, additional sites were acquired. It is unknown precisely how many hostels in total were established throughout the country. Historians are continuing to uncover more sites that migrants identify as hostels or work camps as part of ongoing research into hostels. The classic image of a migrant hostel is of families living in Nissen huts, a type of corrugated iron shed built for military purposes, which accommodated large numbers of people in relatively small areas. However, not all hostels took this form. Some were purpose-built and some were converted from old industrial sites such as the woolsheds in Rosewater, South Australia. Over the years many of the sites were improved. As Australia modernised, so did the migrant hostels to a limited extent. Some sites were upgraded to small flats such as at Pennington in the late 1980s.<sup>46</sup> New types of technologies and better accommodation standards were provided. Many migrants were deeply dissatisfied with hostel accommodation and, in the case of the British, the complaints of a few have led to the colloquial Australian saying that the English are ‘whinging poms’.<sup>47</sup>

Whilst similar in many ways, there were differences in the experiences of reception in Australia and life in the hostels for British migrants in comparison to European migrants and particularly European refugees in the early post-war period. British migrants were considered as deserving of higher standards of accommodation than their DP counterparts. Throughout Australia and across the post-war period, hostels such as Pennington in South Australia housed British, European, Asian and South American immigrants. Other hostels were either designated to or built specifically only to accommodate British migrants, such as Gepps Cross. However, as will be seen in chapter five, this intention of exclusivity for British migrants was not always maintained in the face of higher demand for migrant accommodation than Australian governments were able to provide at various times during the post-war period. British migrants also did not have to fulfil two year work contracts for the Australian Government such as those that applied to DPs. These work contracts allowed the government to move usually male DP anywhere around the country where their labour was required. This often resulted in families being separated from each other as

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<sup>46</sup> Department of Immigration and Internal Affairs, *Evaluation of the New Pennington Migrant Centre* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing, 1987)

<sup>47</sup> “Migrants Cable the Queen”, *The Advertiser*, 23/4/1952, 3; “Migrants to March in Protest-Increase Banned at Gepps Cross”, *The Advertiser*, 21/4/1952, 3.

men were made to work on projects in remote locations, including in different states to where they arrived, whilst their wives and children remained at the migrant hostels.

Through the stereotype of ‘whinging poms’, British migrants have been considered to have expected more from Australia than migrants of other ethnicities. As is explored in chapter three, migrants’ expectations are relative to their personal circumstances and the prevailing conditions in the societies they came from. Despite the hardships of World War Two, early post-war period British migrants to Australia are not considered refugees in the same manner as the DPs that came from Europe. Their expectations can correspondingly be considered to be greater than other post-war migrants to Australia because in many cases the environments they left behind had not been as destitute as those that had prompted refugees to leave their countries. As the effects of the Second World War on various countries throughout Europe including Britain receded into the 1960s and 1970s, the expectations of assisted migrants from Britain and European countries came to resemble one another to a broader extent.

# Literature Review

The British experience of migration to Australia is the base from which the research for this thesis begins. Most of what is known regarding migrant expectations, experiences and interaction with publicity comes from the existing literature on British migration to Australia. This literature review establishes different themes such as class, gender, geography and family size as important influences on the expectations that migrants had prior to their arrival in Australia that are evident in previous scholarship.

The fact that immigration publicity had an encouraging effect on British migrants' decisions to come to Australia after the Second World War and throughout the era in which assisted passage schemes were enacted by Australia is well-documented.<sup>1</sup> Many British migrants have alluded to the fact that they found the publicity to have been misleading upon arrival and during their subsequent settlement. In the case of the British, it is not uncommon for historians or those who use media platforms such as television to include stories of migrants' experiences to emphasize the points they are trying to make.<sup>2</sup> Stories of individual British families have been recorded in written, audio and audio-visual formats, as well as stories of single hostels, such as the small book *Tin Huts and Memories-We Got Our Ten Pounds Worth* by Victor Turner and Frederick Sharon (2006), regarding the lives of British migrants in the Gepps Cross Hostel in South Australia between 1951 and 1965.<sup>3</sup> There have been several publications dealing with the role of film in Australia's migration history. Scholars such as Albert Moran (*Projecting Australia: Government Film Since 1945*), Ina Bertrand, Diane Collins (*Government and Film in Australia*) and Deane Williams (*Australian Post-war Documentary Films: An Arc of Mirrors*) have written books on the making of immigration films in post-war Australia. They examine the formation,

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<sup>1</sup> James Hammerton and Alistair Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants: A Life History of Postwar British Emigration to Australia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Many documentaries on post-war immigration exist, some that hold examples of migrants' experiences are: Lisa Matthews, *Ten Pound Poms* (2007) Television Program, produced by BBC; Michael Davies, *Ten Pound Poms*, (1997) Documentary Films, produced by Touch Productions.

<sup>3</sup> Victor T. Turner and Frederick G. Sharon, *Tin Huts and Memories: We Got Our Ten Pounds Worth-The Story Of Gepps Cross Hostel* (Norwood, South Australia: Peacock Publications, 2006).

role and evolution of organisations such as the Australian Government Film Unit, the Commonwealth Film Unit and Australian National Film Board (ANFB) but do not analyse these films' effects on migrants' expectations in any detail.<sup>4</sup>

Liangwen Kuo's *Migration Documentary Films in Post-War Australia* concludes that film was used to great effect in Australia's pursuit of British migrants. Kuo used a collection of more than sixty short and feature length films about migration, produced by the Australian Government, in order to trace the evolution of films used for the purposes of increasing migration to Australia.<sup>5</sup> This research reveals the extent of the Australian Government's efforts to use the latest technologies to help achieve its immigration targets, but does not provide conclusions regarding the effect this advertising had on the expectations and experiences of the migrants.

*Ten Pound Poms* by Hammerton and Thomson is the quintessential historical text regarding British migrants who came to Australia in the post-war era. The authors discuss British migrants' experiences prior to their departure for Australia and during their time in Australia, as well as the experiences of those who returned to Britain, including references to the publicity and information used to attract British migrants. Hammerton and Thomson point out that one of the major reasons for such a large exodus of Britons to Australia after the war was due to "the tantalizing promise of Australia", in the words of a British migrant whom they interviewed.<sup>6</sup> They show that the publicity that Australia used to advertise for migrants in the post-war period was a factor for some in their decisions, firstly to migrate, and secondly to choose Australia over several other nations that were also seeking immigrants during the same period. The book is clearly sympathetic to the plight of British migrants in Australia in regards to showing that the British also belong to the narrative of difficult settlement experiences, which have usually been attributed to migrants of other ethnicities in the post-war period.<sup>7</sup> As an example, it argues that whilst the British spoke English, this did not automatically result in an easy immigration process and that the British suffered from the same problems as many other migrants such as discrimination, home sickness and difficulties finding employment.

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<sup>4</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Liangwen Kuo, *Migration Documentary Films in Post-War Australia* (New York: Cambria Press, 2010), 273.

<sup>6</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 11.

Books like *Ten Pound Poms*, *The English in Australia* by James Jupp (2004) and *Tin Huts and Memories* include sections that describe both the expectations of British migrants and the experiences they had in Australia, however they do not draw strong conclusions regarding the effect of one on the other. Almost all studies and memoirs that address the British immigrants provide quotes from migrants such as “Grow tall down under”, “Walk tall in Australia” “Dreaming of a better life in Australia” and give the impression that the British expected vast improvements in many if not all parts of life, such as faster home ownership, ease in job advancement and the health benefits they associated with a warmer climate. These types of slogans that were used in publicity for Australia are also quoted with regularity by many of the British migrants who have participated in oral histories for the Hostel Stories project.<sup>8</sup>

The literature acknowledges that the effectiveness of slogans such as these was greatly enhanced due to the contrast they provided with conditions in post-war Britain. Many migrants mention what a tantalizing prospect the “Land of milk and honey” or “The paradise in the sun” was in comparison to a gloomy miserable Britain, which still suffered from the hardships of wartime rationing as long as ten years after the Second World War’s conclusion.<sup>9</sup> Such feelings of disillusionment with the prospects of life in Britain were exacerbated by specific periods and/or events such as the Korean War and the Suez Canal Crisis. These were accompanied by the introduction and later removal of various rationing schemes in Britain, all of which created higher levels in demand for assisted passages from disgruntled members of the British population.<sup>10</sup>

One of the major reasons established in previous texts for the large scale of Australia’s publicity campaign was the competition that existed from other countries that also wished to attract British migrants. Books such as *Shall I Emigrate* by Roy Lewis (1948) provide examples of what an important and difficult decision this choice could be for some prospective migrants, whilst others happily made their decisions to move seemingly on a whim. Other texts of a similar nature make it clear that British

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<sup>8</sup> Responses taken from answers given on registration of interest questionnaire forms for the Hostel Stories project, filled out by British migrants for the Migration Museum of South Australia and the University of Adelaide.

<sup>9</sup> “On This Day: 1950–2005”, BBC, accessed 10/4/2013, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/4/newsid\\_3818000/3818563.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/4/newsid_3818000/3818563.stm).

<sup>10</sup> R.T. Appleyard, *British Emigration to Australia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1964), 209.



migrants did not flock to Australia because it was the only way out of Britain. Emigration to many countries was possible, including several that were thought of highly due to their ties to the British Empire, such as New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.<sup>11</sup>

Class was a factor that had a varied impact on migrants. Working class migrants felt that other migrants from more affluent levels of society expected the British class system to carry over into Australian society, whereas they expected more equal treatment from what they believed to be a far more egalitarian society.<sup>12</sup> The apparent lack of a class system in Australia was an important pull factor for many post-war Britons, especially those from the working class. In many cases, members of the working class were excited by the prospect of an egalitarian society. They were happy to be escaping a society of “Snobbery” and many migrants seem to feel that Australia lived up to their expectations in this respect.<sup>13</sup> Class also played a role in determining where migrants settled. Working class migrants who arrived via assisted passages became concentrated in Perth in Western Australia and Elizabeth in South Australia, whereas the more affluent middle-class migrants who often had Australian sponsors tended to reside in Sydney and Melbourne where social status was more varied.<sup>14</sup>

Gender is another factor that had an effect on migrants’ perceptions of Australia. In contrast to the generally positive feelings about the lack of class barriers in Australia that led to a more equal society, many female migrants came to believe that their gender was substantially undervalued in Australian society.<sup>15</sup> Female British migrants expressed surprise about the different standards between the two sexes. In 1950s and 1960s Australia, women could not purchase property; it was socially unacceptable for them to visit pubs and they were paid substantially less than men across a broad range of professions.<sup>16</sup> These conditions were disturbing for women who originated from a

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<sup>11</sup> Roy Lewis, *Shall I Emigrate?* (London: Phoenix House, 1948), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 138, 139.

<sup>13</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 139.

<sup>14</sup> James Jupp, *The English in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 146–147.

<sup>15</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 140,141.

<sup>16</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 140.

society in which gender equality had progressed at a more rapid rate than was occurring in mid-twentieth century Australia.<sup>17</sup>

Climate is another factor that is often referenced throughout the literature as a factor leading to British emigration to Australia. In many cases the British decided to migrate because the Australian climate was known to be warmer and they associated the warmth with improved health conditions and general happiness.<sup>18</sup> There are numerous examples of migrants being advised to emigrate from Britain to a country with a warmer climate such as Australia in the hope that it would cure a range of diseases, with asthma being the most prevalent among them.<sup>19</sup>

The type of housing from which migrants came was another factor that influenced their expectations and experiences. Almost 500,000 English people (the English accounted for more than eighty percent of all British migrants in this period) came to Australia between 1947 and 1976 and of these approximately eighty percent came from urban backgrounds.<sup>20</sup> Over a forty-year period that extended into the 1980s after assisted passages had been stopped, the largest region from which British migrants came to Australia was the south-east of England, including forty four percent from the city of London alone. This urban background was beneficial for the migrants who went on to settle into an Australian suburban lifestyle. However, even those from urban backgrounds had difficulties in adjusting to Australian suburban life due to factors such as the lack of effective public transport, which was far more developed in London than any of the large Australian cities.<sup>21</sup> The need to buy cheap affordable housing meant many of the migrants lived far away from city centres and the beaches frequently seen in the publicity for Australia, which sometimes led to feelings of deception and disgruntlement amongst the British migrants.

The other highly significant factor behind British immigration to Australia in the post-war period is that the Australian Commonwealth Government was offering assisted passage schemes. The Government encouraged Australian citizens to sponsor

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<sup>17</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 140,141.

<sup>18</sup> Jupp, *English in Australia*, 133; Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 40; Patricia Donnelly, *Migrant Journeys or What the Hell Have we Done?* (Gilles Plains, South Australia: Affordable Print, 1999), 59.

<sup>19</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 41.

<sup>20</sup> Jupp, *English in Australia*, 132.

<sup>21</sup> Jupp, *English in Australia*, 145.

British migrants, and businesses to advertise for workers in Britain and sponsor their immigration to Australia. These private interest holders then provided accommodation for the migrants for as long as a year during their initial settlement.<sup>22</sup> As we have seen the most popular and well known scheme for British immigration came to be known as the Ten Pound Pom scheme. Many of the migrants who came to Australia for this small fee due to the assistance provided by both the Australian and British governments still refer to themselves as Ten Pound Poms when speaking of their immigrant past and are referred to by others using that terminology.<sup>23</sup> It is a term now used to describe British migrants from the post-war period generically. This scheme was responsible for the immigration to Australia of not only those who were seeking a new life but tourists in the 1960s and 1970s who thought of the ten pound scheme as a highly affordable way to see the world, but eventually decided to settle in Australia as a result of their initial assisted passage. The literature also points out that the assisted passages were initially being offered during a period in which Britain was expecting high unemployment, providing further impetus for non-skilled workers to take this cheap option to leave Britain and go to countries where jobs were supposedly plentiful.<sup>24</sup> Jupp asserts that the greatest attraction for British migrants to choose Australia was the cost, as a family of four could purchase their passage for the small sum of twenty pounds, which compared very favourably with the cost of reaching other destinations.<sup>25</sup> There also were other incentives to coming on an assisted passage, such as access to the Australian welfare system and the right to vote after just six months in the country, conditions that had not been offered previously by Australia.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on the assisted passage schemes by Jupp contradicts the popular notion of Australia's publicity being largely responsible for convincing migrants to come from Britain to Australia, which much of the existing literature supports or at least does not contradict.

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<sup>22</sup> Appleyard, *Emigration*, 188.

<sup>23</sup> This can be seen in oral histories and amongst migrant communities as well as in other sources such as: Turner, *Tin Huts*; Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*; Scott Begbie, "Oz's 'Ten Pound Poms' must keep the right to vote", *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 29/6/2009; Wilfred Prest and Graham Tulloch, ed., *Scatterings of Empire* (St Lucia, Queensland: Queensland University Press, 2001); Kellie Abbott, *Family Journeys: Stories in the National Archives of Australia* (Canberra: NAA, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children-Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 256.

<sup>25</sup> Jupp, *English in Australia*, 133.

<sup>26</sup> Jupp, *English in Australia*, 136.

The scholarly literature makes it clear that there were very mixed reactions to the country amongst British migrants upon arrival in Australia. Various levels of anxiety were common for the new British migrants and hostel residents that were in family groups in particular seemed to suffer from high levels of anxiety upon their arrival at the hostels.<sup>27</sup> The migrant hostels in many cases were not what they had been expecting, leaving many feeling disillusioned about their future prospects in Australia. In contrast to migrant families, young single men in particular found the settling in period to be much easier. They enjoyed the camaraderie offered by living with other young single men and during the initial post-war years found it relatively easy to secure employment and move away from the hostels.<sup>28</sup> Many migrants were dissatisfied with the available food in the hostels, yet others who had either moved out of a hostel or had never stayed in one were shocked by the abundance of fresh produce available and the affordability of meat products that had been hard to come by in Britain.<sup>29</sup> Building on ideas such as these, this thesis argues that happiness and satisfaction with their new country was heavily influenced by each individual's personal situation. The British were in an environment they were not accustomed to in which some struggled to adjust whilst others found the experiences exhilarating.

A subject explored in detail in this thesis is the expectations and experiences of the British migrant community that existed in the town of Elizabeth in South Australia. There is already an extensive body of literature regarding the early years of this town, however this literature is focused predominantly upon the place, as opposed to the people and their experiences. Elizabeth was planned and built by the SAHT and the SAHT has provided a number of published texts relating to the establishment of the town, the key figures in its history and detailed historiographical record of the planning and expansion of the town.<sup>30</sup> These texts provide important information that aids the investigation of the migrants who inhabited the town, such as establishment dates for new suburbs, when noteworthy events took place and information about the expansion

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<sup>27</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 129.

<sup>28</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 130.

<sup>29</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 126.

<sup>30</sup> Wendy Bromwell, *Chronological History of the South Australian Housing Trust* (Adelaide: South Australian Housing Trust, 2001); South Australian Housing Trust, *History of Elizabeth: Chronological Table* (Adelaide: South Australian Housing Trust-Information Centre, 1966); *Elizabeth- Local Information* (Adelaide: South Australian Housing Trust, 1971).

of the town and those local people who became involved in shaping the area's future. These texts also describe the industrial expansion of the town, particularly in regards to the growth of the manufacturing industry during the 1960s and 1970s.

Other scholars from outside the SAHT also have written about these subjects. Texts such as *Elizabeth: From Dusty Plains to Royal Names* by Linda Allery (1996) and *Elizabeth-The Garden City* by Margaret Galbreath (1982) provide histories of the town from a perspective outside of the SAHT.<sup>31</sup> However, they also go beyond the development and architectural side of the town's history and include stories from local people, including British migrants.<sup>32</sup> However, these books do not set out to examine life for migrants in this town, nor do they discuss the expectations that migrants had when they came to live there.

Various published works pertaining to Elizabeth by the historian Mark Peel provide much of the most relevant literature for the themes in this thesis. Peel sets out to examine what life was like for the ordinary people in Elizabeth and not just the well-known personalities such as Thomas Playford. Though his work does not address migrants as a specific group, Peel did talk to many inhabitants of Elizabeth who were British migrants, and includes their testimony as he explores a variety of factors that influenced life in the town, such as the differences that were created due to gender stereotypes and the deliberate construction of a class structure in the new community.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, he is the only scholar to have addressed the publicity that was used specifically to entice migrants to Elizabeth, by pointing out how the SAHT's office in London attempted to show potential migrants the supposedly positive differences that Elizabeth had in comparison to a new town in Britain.<sup>34</sup> He also points out that Elizabeth explicitly was designed to be a model city. It was supposed to be an improvement on the new towns that had been created in Britain that would transform the many British working class migrants into people with more middle class aspirations

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<sup>31</sup> Margaret Galbreath, *Elizabeth-The Garden City* (Adelaide: The Corporation of the City of Elizabeth, 1982).

<sup>32</sup> Linda Allery, *Elizabeth: From Dusty Plains to Royal Names-Oral Histories from the Elizabeth Community* (Gawler: Articulate Productions, 1996), 40, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Mark Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times: The Past and the Future in Elizabeth* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 121–133, 102.

<sup>34</sup> Mark Peel, "Planning the Good City in Australia: Elizabeth as a New Town", in *Urban Research Program Working Paper 24–32* (Canberra: Urban Research Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1992), 33.

and practices. Peel also describes the British migrants of Elizabeth as being isolated. These findings lead directly into my work regarding the difference between migrants who settled in the new town of Elizabeth as compared to those that settled in the more established suburbs of Adelaide, as it was hypothesised that geographic isolation was a key issue for the numerous migrants who left the bustling city of London to live in what many describe as a 'barren' land.

## **Gaps in the Scholarship**

An analysis of the various scholarly texts that relate to British immigration gives the impression that publicity was a significant factor in the decision making of a large portion of British migrants who came to Australia after World War Two. However, the seminal text on this subject, *Ten Pound Poms*, presents a somewhat conflicted position on this matter. Despite presenting a number of migrants' comments regarding the inaccuracy of Australia's migration publicity and information, it also presents a table in its main chapter addressing migrants' primary motivations for coming to Australia, in which it shows that publicity was far from being one of the primary and diverse motivators amongst the several hundred migrants upon which the study in *Ten Pound Poms* is based. The presentation of publicity in other scholarly literature does nothing to dispel its position within popular narratives of being misleading or deliberately deceptive. The perception of Australia's publicity as deceptive has been primarily based upon the testimony of those migrants who had poor experiences with it. Not having made inquiries about the accuracy of migrants' claims about misleading publicity is a major flaw in the literature relating to migrants expectations. As a result it is unknown whether the migrants from these diverse groups consider themselves to have been misled or misinformed by the Australian government or whether they consider what they found upon arrival and settlement in Australia to have been satisfactory or even above expectations.

Another gap in the existing literature is its failure to analyse what factors did have an impact on the building of British migrants expectations, in lieu of the assumption that their expectations were primarily influenced by publicity. This thesis refines the established literature regarding migrants' expectations by considering the factors that contributed to the building of most migrants' expectations alongside the influence that publicity had for some.

The experiences of migrant hostel residents in South Australia is the other major gap in scholarly literature that this thesis addresses. South Australia had been largely ignored in the narrative of hostel experiences in Australia until the Hostel Stories project began in 2011. This has occurred because of factors including; the idea that British migrants are 'invisible' as migrants in Australia, previous scholars willingness to use the Bonegilla Migrant Hostel on the New South Wales/Victorian border as a

representative experience for all post-war migrants to Australia-regardless of nationality or what hostel migrants actually stayed at and the general lack of interest that had been expressed in learning the stories of South Australia's hostel residents until the unexpected interest shown in response to the removal of the South Australian migration Museums Hostel exhibit in 2006. Throughout this thesis the stories of British migrants that stayed in South Australia's hostels are used to inform the arguments and conclusions that are made within it. This work is an important contribution to the literature surrounding Australian immigration history in general, and South Australian migration history more specifically. This thesis meets the desire for further research and commemoration of the hostels that has been demonstrated by former hostel residents and migration/cultural historians in recent years..<sup>35</sup>

Making the comparison between expectations and reality is an important part of the expanding literature on migrant hostels. The stories of individual migrants have been used in many different ways and in a variety of contexts to influence policy debates. However, until now, no one has attempted to study a broad group of migrants from different backgrounds, who came to various new environments in Australia, to discover how their experiences were influenced by these factors throughout the period in which migrant hostels operated.

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<sup>35</sup> Catherine Manning-South Australian Migration Museum Curator to Justin Madden, various dates, 2012–2013.



# Chapter Two: Encouraging Migration Through Publicity: The Australian Campaign to Attract British Migrants

For the foregoing reasons, we intend to embark on an adequate publicity campaign in Britain and in other centres of potential immigration on the European continent, designed to explain to the people there our anxiety to receive them on the one hand, and the causes for the delays that are inevitable on the other. Much of the publicity in earlier migration campaigns was of a misleading nature. Those mistakes will not be repeated on this occasion. By thus dealing honestly with the possible migrant, we hope to inspire him with confidence in the bona fides of Australia and thereby increase his desire to take up life in this country.

Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, 2 August 1945.<sup>1</sup>

Much of this thesis concerns Australia's use of publicity to persuade British residents to migrate to Australia. This chapter explores how Australian Commonwealth and state governments used publicity in the post-war period (with a focus on the early post-war period of 1945–1960) to achieve their ambitious migration targets.

The scholarship regarding this subject has frequently featured migrants' claims that the publicity was misleading and deceptive, and the information about conditions in Australia was not adequate to prepare them for the realities of life in Australia. Typical statements from this literature include:

I was shocked. All the leaflets and information we had read before we left home had painted such a rosy picture. Nothing had prepared me for this. If the people in Australia didn't want us, why were we so encouraged to come?<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps it was fortunate that many of the early migrants were ignorant of the pitfalls awaiting them on their arrival. If they had been more aware,

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<sup>1</sup> State Records of South Australia, GRG7/24/00000/87, State Tourist Bureau and Successors, Correspondence Files-Resumption of Assisted Migration, Resumption of Assisted Migration-Immigration-Government Policy, Statement by Minister for Immigration, Hon A. A. Calwell, M. H. R., 2/8/1945.

<sup>2</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 145.

they might never have set off on the long sea voyage that would take them to the other side of the world.<sup>3</sup>

The collection of migrant stories put together by migrants to form the book *Tin Huts and Memories* is particularly critical of Australian publicity and information. The following quotes are a series of responses it gives to the messages that were conveyed in some of that publicity. “Higher wages, lower taxes—who wrote this? Forty hour, five day week—not if you wanted to move out of your tin hut!” And in response to another migration poster that included the slogans, “Men for the land, women for the home, good wages, plenty of opportunity”, the authors responded in sarcastic tone with “They must have decided to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, except that the women had to work as well, if they ever wanted to get ahead, get out of the hostel, and acquire the Australian dream: a home of their own”.<sup>4</sup> These as well as other parts of this book make it clear how the authors felt about Australian publicity.

Popular media coverage about the British experience also supports the idea of migrants being deceived by Australian publicity. For instance, the documentary *No Milk, No Honey* (1997), features migrants that show their disdain for what they call the “Seductive propaganda”, and give negative opinions of the publicity claiming that they felt they had been duped and that the “Glamorous brochures...told all lies”.<sup>5</sup> Another documentary called *Ten Pound Poms* (1997) conveys similar views, such as that the message that migrants took from the publicity was that “The streets were paved with gold” and that photos of Australian beaches were used to good effect as sales pitches for the country.<sup>6</sup>

For many British migrants the nature of Australia’s publicity remains an issue that provokes feelings of deception and anger, whilst for others it has become inconsequential over time. Overall, there tends to be agreement that much of the publicity was unrealistic and the perceptions built around it compounded the problems which many migrants faced when trying to settle in Australia. Whether this assessment of Australia’s publicity is accurate has not previously been the subject of critical examination. A notable exception to this is the scholarly text *The Ten Pound Fare* by

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<sup>3</sup> Betka Zamoyska, *The Ten Pound Fare: Experiences of British People who Emigrated to Australia in the 1950s* (London: Viking, 1988), 31.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, *Tin Huts*, 18,19.

<sup>5</sup> Franco di Chiera, *No Milk, No Honey* (1997) Film, produced by Andrew Ogilvie.

<sup>6</sup> Davies, *Ten Pound Poms*.

Betra Zamoyska (1988). Norman Hoffman, in the introduction he wrote for *The Ten Pound Fare*, argues against this attitude. He asserts that:

While the official leaflets on such subjects as housing, health, education and social services were carefully worded to provide as accurate a picture as possible, in reality most prospective migrants believed what they wanted to, ignoring or downplaying the information which did not fit the picture they had created.

Hoffman also asserts that the:

[T]en Pound Scheme worked admirably in achieving its twin objectives of providing Australia with much-needed people, while at the same time offering better opportunities to Britons...this migration programme mostly produced the results which the Australian Government advertisements and posters claimed—a better climate, better prospects for families and improved opportunities.<sup>7</sup>

However, it must be acknowledged that in this case, the author—Hoffman—was writing at a time when he was employed by the Australian Government as the Regional Director of Migration for Britain and Ireland and was stationed at the Australian High Commission in London. This position may well have compromised his ability to speak impartially about the past activities of the DOI, the effectiveness and accuracy of the publicity campaign in Britain and the activities of migration officials who were involved with the publicity campaign in Britain in the post-war period. Hoffman may well have been expressing the views that his employer the DOI, wished him to during that period. There was a strong emphasis on Australian migration officials doing everything possible to attract British migrants to Australia. This mindset may have influenced Hoffman as well as many other public servants' opinions regarding the benevolent intentions of the department to provide accurate information and their overarching goal of attracting as many migrants to Australia as possible. Therefore, Hoffman's claims, just like those of disgruntled migrants, cannot be simply believed without being tested by proper evidence.

In this chapter, the question of the validity of the negative perception of the publicity provided and the information available is assessed. Extensive new research through the files of the Departments of Immigration, Information and Interior, amongst other federal and state migration agencies provide insight into the intentions of

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<sup>7</sup> Zamoyska, *The Ten Pound Fare*, xx, xxiv.

Australian governments, the accuracy of the information distributed and the quality of detailed information about Australia that was available to British migrants if they pursued it. These findings are supported by new oral histories of post-war British migrants where questions relating to publicity and information were posed. The chapter challenges the perception that the Australian publicity campaign to attract British migrants was deceptive. Conversely, it argues that the publicity and information available in Britain to attract immigrants to Australia was largely factual, underwent constant updating and improvement and was not designed to deceive British migrants. It was certainly intended to encourage high expectations and aspirations for life in Australia amongst the British—and it did this successfully. It also argues that most migrants were aware that the initial publicity which they saw was designed to lure them to Australia and that engaging with only this type of material would not provide them with an accurate conception of conditions in Australia. It shows that additional information was available to migrants who pursued it, through multiple channels, such as Australian immigration officials in Britain or through direct requests made to Australian government departments on specific issues. It argues that many of the disgruntled migrants would have had more reasonable expectations if they had engaged with multiple types of publicity and information available to them and pursued further information to make them as well informed as possible.

The first part of this chapter addresses the idea of Australia as a colony of the British Empire, and how in post-war Britain, potential migrants already had reasons to choose Australia as their destination over other parts of the British Empire, which in turn made them more receptive to the publicity that they encountered regarding migration to Australia. It then discusses how Australian governments created and used their publicity. Several examples of this publicity are discussed to inform the reader about the types of advertising to which British migrants were exposed in Britain, which in some cases influenced their decisions to migrate and shaped their expectations of South Australia and Australia in general. The dissemination of the publicity will also be discussed in order to show how Australia targeted specific groups in Britain and demonstrates the high quantity of publicity and informative material British people had access to. The changing nature of Australia's publicity is documented, as well as how that change was linked to varying economic and social factors in both Britain and Australia. The level of input that both Commonwealth and South Australian

government departments had in the creation of publicity is shown to demonstrate the efforts that were made to provide effective publicity which was broadly representative of conditions in Australia.<sup>8</sup> The types and availability of follow-up information available to migrants on their journeys by ship to Australia are also discussed, showing what was available aboard, the similarities and differences between information given to migrants once they were on their way to Australia as opposed to that provided when Australia was trying to entice them to migrate, and the shift in the intentions of Australian governments from enticement to more informative information. This chapter also makes comparisons between the publicity shown in Britain by Australia as opposed to what was shown in other parts of the world—to demonstrate the clear preference for—and the greater efforts invested in attracting British migrants. The strengths and weaknesses of all of these aspects of Australia’s publicity in Britain are displayed throughout this analysis. It shows the benevolent intentions of successive Australian governments and dispels the myth that Australian publicity was generally inaccurate, deliberately misleading and the root cause of so much return migration that has been so overwhelmingly accepted in other literature regarding British post-war migration to Australia.

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The post-war mindset for many in Britain was still one that conceptualised Britain as an empire. Tony Judt wrote that:

[T]o anyone raised in post-war Britain, ‘England’, ‘Britain’ and ‘British Empire’ were near synonymous terms....The white dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—were independent, but their formal allegiance to the Crown, their effective ties to Britain, the food and raw materials they could supply and their armed forces were regarded as national assets in all but name.<sup>9</sup>

For the potential British emigrant, the dominion nations were their natural destinations. These nations provided the opportunities that British migrants were seeking and

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<sup>8</sup> The majority of government work regarding publicity was carried out by Commonwealth agencies and therefore is not specific to South Australia. As a result of specific evidence relating to the input and activities of South Australian agencies not being consistently available, much of this chapter focuses on the work of the Commonwealth Departments of Immigration and Information.

<sup>9</sup> Tony Judt, *Post-War, A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2007), 278, 279.

simultaneously allowed them to maintain strong nationalistic and empire-based connections with their homeland.

British people looked upon Australia and the other dominion nations as extensions of Britain itself. Because of this, some of those who chose to migrate to Australia made assumptions of what the country would be like. Migrants expected Australia to be a larger but less populated version of Britain. In many regards Australia was similar to Britain, but similarity did not necessarily mean Australia was as the British expected it to be. For example, use of the English language is perhaps the most obvious similarity between British and Australian societies. Consequently, migrants expected that communication would not be a problem for them in Australia. However, despite speaking the same language, some migrants went on to discover, Australians were markedly different to British people in their use of language and that subtle differences in pronunciation, word choice and accent could make communicating with Australians a more difficult than anticipated experience.<sup>10</sup> Some migrants found that having a British accent held them back when trying to integrate into Australian society. When discussing trying to fit in at his first Australian job in Adelaide's Public Trustee Department, Geoff Hakes, who arrived in 1960, stated that "Pretty much everybody was an Australian and I know my first few months was very difficult because of my English accent".<sup>11</sup>

Australia's post-war publicity in some cases reinforced the idea to British people that Australia was an extension of Britain and the assumptions that came with this belief. Some of the publicity even included information about Australia's role as a member of the Commonwealth and its role as part of the British Empire. The booklet *Know Australia* says the following regarding "What is Australia's status within the British Empire"?

The only constitutional link is the crown, but there are also the strong and unbreakable ties of blood and brotherhood with Britain....Experience has shown that Australia's independent status has in no way weakened the ties of tradition and sentiment with the mother country. On the contrary, while there has been a marked increase in the cordiality of Australia's

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<sup>10</sup> Irene and Lesley Coulson, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>11</sup> Geoff Hakes, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

relations with the U.S.A and a certain influence by American ideas and customs on Australian life, Australia's attitude to Britain is best illustrated by the gift [from Australia to Britain] of £25,000,000 in 1947...and the anxiety to help Britain in her period of great stress.<sup>12</sup>

Although it was not misleading or designed to dupe migrants into believing Australia was exactly like Britain, this type of information reinforced the notion that despite Australia having politically pivoted towards the US, British migrants should still expect to find a culture that was recognisably and predominantly British.

In relation to Australia's publicity campaign, the *Chichester Plan of Migration from the U.K to British Dominions* makes a poignant point which illustrates that people in Britain were aware that publicity from dominion countries including Australia had previously been misleading. The booklet that outlined this plan states that:

[T]he first action to be undertaken by the (proposed) organisation must be that of collecting the true facts of the conditions prevailing in these countries. The Empire must be put through a fine mesh from one end to the other in order to obtain a clear picture of the real situation in all these lands. There must be no more migrations inspired by misrepresentations and highly coloured booklets. The tragedies of the past forbid it.<sup>13</sup>

It was sentiments such as this that led to Australian governments placing such high emphasis on the accuracy of the information they distributed to encourage British people to migrate in the post-war period.

In comparison to all other attempts (both prior to and after Federation) by Australian governments to attract migrants to its shores, Australia's publicity campaign to attract British migrants after the end of the Second World War was unprecedented in both its scale and its success. As shown in the previous chapter, in the aftermath of the Second World War it was the desire of the Australian Government to increase the country's population rapidly through migration from Britain.

The Labour Commonwealth Government, headed by Prime Minister Chifley, created the DOI on 13 July 1945 and appointed Calwell to the post of Minister for

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<sup>12</sup> NAA, Department of Immigration, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1950/5/2133, Abbery H. H and Family-return to UK, Know Australia Booklet.

<sup>13</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1945/5/426, Chichester plan of Migration from U.K. to British Dominions, February 1945.

Immigration. At the time, the Government was committed to the ‘White Australia Policy’, which resulted in Calwell proclaiming that an immigration quota of ten persons from Britain to every one person from the continent of Europe would be pursued.<sup>14</sup>

Work on Australia’s post-war immigration policy and the subsequent pursuit of British migrants began well before the war’s conclusion.<sup>15</sup> The number of migrants hoped for as well as the need for a large scale publicity campaign in Britain had been determined by August of 1945, so that Australia would be ready to restart assisted passage migration from Britain immediately upon the war’s conclusion.<sup>16</sup> In his speech to parliament on 2 August 1945 (exactly one month prior to Japan’s signing of its unconditional surrender and the subsequent ending of all hostilities in the Second World War), outlining Australia’s immigration policy in both the short and long term, Calwell declared that a publicity campaign would be needed in Britain and other European nations that could potentially provide Australia with immigrants. It would be “Designed to explain to the people [British and some European migrants] there our anxiety to receive them on the one hand and the causes for the delays [lack of shipping for transport to Australia] that are inevitable on the other”.<sup>17</sup> This statement reveals that one of the goals of the initial publicity campaign was to keep British migrants who already wished to migrate to Australia interested, rather than actually attracting them given transport options remained difficult. The statement reflects that the Government was confident at this time that it could secure the numbers of migrants it desired in the immediate post-war period, and that the most pressing obstacle at that time was not attracting migrants but keeping them committed to migration whilst the shipping needed to bring them out was arranged.

The DOI’s publicity campaign to attract British migrants to Australia was well underway by 1946. Australia had implemented agreements with Britain to allow British ex-servicemen stationed throughout the world to migrate to Australia with free passages, including those in Britain and those already present in Australia due to their

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<sup>14</sup> Richards, *Destination Australia*, 180.

<sup>15</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1945/5/156, Australia Day Publicity in Great Britain, Copy of Australia Calls: We welcome new citizens, by senator J. S. Collings, published in the *Daily Dispatch*, 26/1/1945.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not* (Clayton, Victoria: Wilke and Company Limited, 1972), 96.

<sup>17</sup> SRSA, 000024/00000/000087, Immigration-Government Policy, 2/8/1945, 5.



wartime duties.<sup>18</sup> Assisted passage schemes for British civilian migrants were implemented between the Australian and British governments in 1947, creating the need for a publicity campaign to attract British people to Australia that would be sustained for a generation.

The newly formed DOI was the primary producer and overseer of the publicity campaign to attract British migrants. Department staff located in Canberra and Melbourne in the early years of the post-war migration program—and later in other state capitals—constantly liaised with department staff stationed at Australia House in London and in other Australian migration centres around Britain.<sup>19</sup> The interaction between the various offices of the DOI, as well as inter-departmental communication was often concerned with the accuracy and improvement of the ongoing publicity campaign being undertaken. Immigration Publicity Officers, the Chief Migration Officer in London, the Immigration Advisory Council and various other government employees from the Departments of Immigration, Information and Interior regularly and extensively discussed methods by which the publicity campaign could be improved. Examples of this include the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Publicity Committee's (CIACPC) review of all publicity material being distributed in Britain. Its review acknowledges that changing economic conditions in Australia in 1951 were leading to higher unemployment and that it would no longer be appropriate to advertise to migrants that Australia had a job for everyone. The Committee ordered that migration publicity with outdated information be removed from distribution in Britain so it could be changed to reflect the updated unemployment figures. Upon reprinting of the relevant material, they found the new information that showed an increase in Australia's unemployment from 1000 persons to 4000 had also become outdated as the number had by that point risen to 12,000, and so the Committee again ordered the material not be distributed, until such time as accurate information could be included.<sup>20</sup> They also conducted checks on the information that was being given to potential

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<sup>18</sup> John Lack and Jacqueline Templeton, *Bold Experiment-A Documentary History of Australian Immigration since 1945* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>19</sup> "The Immigration Journey", Department of Immigration and Border Protection, accessed 18/2/2015, <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/anniversary/journey.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence Files, 1/1/1922–31/12/1968, Control symbol 140/5/16, Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council Publicity Committee, Memorandum to Mr. Martin Manning from Hugh Murphy, Immigration Publicity Officer.

migrants verbally by officers in Australia's British migration offices. In one instance, the secretary of the Department of External Affairs brought to the attention of the Chief Migration Officer in London in 1946 that British migrants were complaining that they had been told they could secure immediate assisted passages to Australia if they had a sponsor in the country. The Chief Migration Officer then clarified the information that was being given to potential migrants on this issue to ensure that this perception was not encouraged by migration officials in Britain.<sup>21</sup> Migration officers in Britain also were diligent in updating department staff in Australia with relevant information pertaining to the changing conditions in Britain that could affect how publicity was received. They offered advice on measures that should be taken to improve the publicity being used to create interest in migration, and improve the more in-depth information given to prospective migrants, to ensure more accurate information was given to people interested in migrating to Australia.<sup>22</sup>

In part this extensive effort to provide accurate information was a response to the aftermath of Australia's publicity campaign in Britain that had followed the First World War. The perception existed that Australian publicity was exaggerated and regularly provided inaccurate information, leading to many migrants returning to Britain.<sup>23</sup> These feelings regarding publicity were easily recalled by both Australian residents and many new potential migrants in Britain. In 1933, they had witnessed or were aware of a large rally in Melbourne by British ex-servicemen demanding compensation from the Australian Government as well as immediate repatriation to Britain because they had not granted them access to the benefits associated with Australia's Repatriation Act. They had assumed that they would be fully entitled to those benefits in Australia because they were British soldiers and had not been informed otherwise. Their protest was successful and they each received their

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<sup>21</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1946/5/3335, Australia House-Check on information given to enquirers-Re-nomination from Australia, Memorandum for the Secretary, DOI, Canberra from the Deputy High Commissioner, London, 8/7/1946.

<sup>22</sup> NAA, A445, 140/5/16.

<sup>23</sup> "Migration-Misleading Publicity", *The West Australian*, 25/10/1927, 14; "Migration Investigation-Commonwealth Publicity Tour", *The Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette*, 8/4/1927, 1; "British Migrants Would Return", *Freeman's Journal*, 6/11/1930, 24.

repatriation as well as a small compensation package.<sup>24</sup> This problem was further exacerbated because misleading publicity was perceived to have come from throughout Britain's dominion nations after the First World War, as shown in the Chichester plan for post-war migration:

Before this war, emigration from the British Isles [to all its dominions] was carried out so unmethodically, that the question of security in respect of home and employment for the emigrant when he reached the other side was rarely considered. If long term arrangements had been made for him before his departure, as they should have been made, we would never have seen so many returning to this country between the two wars, thoroughly disappointed and wholly disheartened.<sup>25</sup>

Having decided on its ambitious migration goals for the years and even decades to come after the Second World War's conclusion, and knowing that keeping migrants in Australia permanently was the aim of the migration program rather than just getting the migrants here in the first place, the Australian Government did not want a repeat of these types of occurrences. It set out to ensure that it did not provide disgruntled migrants with sufficient reason to do so.

As alluded to above, the DOI was not responsible for all publicity being shown in Britain by Australia in the post-war era. The Commonwealth Department of Information (DOIN) also was heavily involved in promoting Australia in Britain during this period. The DOIN's publicity was designed to promote Australia abroad in general terms, and was not specifically designed to encourage migration. When the publicity that the DOIN produced did have a high likelihood of generating interest in migration to Australia, the DOI would review what they had created and contribute to the production and distribution costs at a level they deemed to correspond with the amount of interest that would be generated for migration.<sup>26</sup> The DOI also required the right to have some control over what was published in cases where it chose to contribute to the production

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<sup>24</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1945/5/227, British Soldiers as Migrants, views of the R.S.L., British Ex-Service Personnel-Proposals re Pensions, Social Benefits, Landing Money, Free Passages, 19/3/1945.

<sup>25</sup> NAA, A436, 1945/5/426.

<sup>26</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, Department of Information, Central Office, A436, Correspondence files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1947/5/416, Films produced for general publicity, Correspondence from E. G. Bonney, Director-General, DOI to Mr. A. R. Peters, Acting Secretary, Department of Information.

costs of the DOIN. For example, all films produced by the (ANFB) were reviewed by staff from the DOI prior to their final production. This process occurred so that they could ensure that an acceptable standard of accuracy in publicity regarding immigration was achieved, as this was a critical aim of the DOI, but not necessarily of the DOIN. This commitment to ensuring accuracy is demonstrated in the following correspondence from the Director General of the DOIN to the secretary of the DOI, in which he states “Before any editing of the film is proceeded with, there will be a complete interchange of ideas between your Department and the film makers, so that the production will be in complete accord with your Department’s policy”. The commitment to accuracy is further demonstrated by a report on the film “The New Ipswich” (1947) by the DOI’s Senior Investigation Officer where he declares that the films:

[S]hots of the city itself are not attractive but are honest publicity in the sense that very few Australian country towns are photogenic, and it contrives to convey an impression of sunlight and good living even in rather drab surroundings...It is certainly honest, factual and specific in its visual statements...I was unable to detect anything in the narration to which exception could be taken.<sup>27</sup>

The DOI’s insistence on reviewing the material created for migration publicity by other government departments shows the commitment that was made to providing migrants with accurate information regarding conditions in Australia. It is direct evidence that the publicity was not designed to deceive potential migrants. Rather, it was an effort to imbibe them with a sense of aspiration and realistic expectations.

Each state government was involved in the production of material that publicised their specific states as well as material that publicised Australia generally. Work involving South Australia’s interests and obligations regarding publicity to be shown in Britain was primarily undertaken by the Immigration, Publicity and Tourist Bureau (IPTB). The IPTB was consulted on the messages being portrayed about the State and was often asked to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information concerning living conditions in South Australia, so that factual and appropriate information would be conveyed to migrants.<sup>28</sup> Though not directly related to creating publicity, an important duty of some of the state immigration departments was

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<sup>27</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416.

<sup>28</sup> SRSA, GRG7/24/00000/000087, Document from the Director of the IPTB to the Secretary of the DOI, Canberra, 19/7/1948.

inspecting the accommodation that would be provided to British immigrants who had sponsors in Australia.<sup>29</sup> Sponsors were required to provide new migrants with accommodation, meaning that these migrants would not be entering a government-operated hostel, where government departments were in direct control of the facilities provided. Due to the many complaints being generated from British migrants regarding accommodation provided by sponsors, the state immigration authorities were required to send officers on inspections of the accommodation being prepared for migrants. In a large majority of cases, these inspections judged that the accommodation was of an adequate standard and would meet migrants' needs.<sup>30</sup> Given that the complaints regarding housing problems continued throughout the post-war period, in spite of housing being judged to be of a reasonable standard by immigration officers, it can be surmised that government employees in Australia had substantially different views on what constituted adequate accommodation—in comparison to the migrants who eventually stayed there. This difference of opinions between migrants and immigration officers indicates that the migrants had greater expectations for that accommodation than Australian authorities.

One of the early methods used by the DOI to attract British migrants was to put on exhibitions in British towns and cities that had namesake towns and cities in Australia. Notable cities in Britain that hosted these events include Newcastle-on-Tyne, Ipswich and Perth. Newcastle-on-Tyne was the first city to host such an event and was thereafter used as the prototype for all future namesake town exhibitions. In 1946 Newcastle-on-Tyne was a city of 300,000 inhabitants. Australian immigration officials approached the civic and education authorities of the town regarding their hosting of an exhibition about migration to Australia and were met with great enthusiasm. The authorities agreed to provide immigration officials with assistance in displaying the exhibition in the town as well as circulating it throughout all the schools in the local area. Teachers were instructed to tell school children about the exhibition in the hope

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<sup>29</sup> Government employees are known to have carried out these inspections in South Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. It is not confirmed whether or not these inspections took place in other Australian States and Territories. Inspections were not conducted for all accommodation as this was considered impractical to do so. However, in South Australia, questionnaires were sent to all nominators to enquire about their readiness to accept new migrants, which focused particularly on the accommodation they were providing.

<sup>30</sup> SRSA, GRG/24/00000/87, Inspections.

that they would then inform and encourage their parents to attend.<sup>31</sup> Multiple newspaper services also offered the DOI use of their columns for articles about migration and news stories about current events in Newcastle, New South Wales. The British Broadcasting Commission (BBC) was approached and agreed to broadcast a twenty eight minute radio session regarding Newcastle throughout the Newcastle-on-Tyne area.<sup>32</sup>

The exhibition in Newcastle, New South Wales, was based upon the work of a team of photographers, cameraman and journalists that the DOI sent to Newcastle to gather information and create publicity pieces that would be attractive to the inhabitants of Newcastle-on-Tyne. They focused on the development of secondary industries in the town, employment opportunities and features such as the surf beaches, the sunshine and Lake Macquarie.<sup>33</sup> Their productions included a booklet entitled the *Way of Life*, which included pictorial and letter press representations of life in Newcastle, one hundred and forty five enlarged photographs of the Newcastle town and area, as well as articles accompanied by images for the local newspapers. They also created a colour film for display at the exhibition that included commentary and music and as in the printed literature addressed aspects of life in Newcastle, such as its industries, home life and recreational attractions.<sup>34</sup>

The exhibition was formally opened in Newcastle-on-Tyne by Australia's Deputy High Commissioner and was held in the town's Tate Gallery, with the films about Newcastle and Australia shown in an adjoining hall. The exhibition, as well as those that followed in other namesake towns was highly successful in the eyes of the DOI, as it resulted in large numbers of British people interacting with both Australia's publicity material and its migration officials. The exhibition at Newcastle-on-Tyne was hailed as being very successful by migration officials, though attendance figures are presently unknown. However, the exhibition in Perth, Scotland (which generated less attendance than had been hoped, according to the same officials), which followed shortly after the Newcastle-on-Tyne exhibition, attracted close to seven and a half thousand people during the three-week period in which it was displayed, which equates to more than ten per cent of that town's inhabitants having seen the exhibition and

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<sup>31</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416, Bonney

<sup>32</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416, Bonney

<sup>33</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416, Bonney

<sup>34</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416, Bonney

makes it possible that a greater portion than ten percent of the population of Newcastle-on-Tyne would have seen the exhibition there.<sup>35</sup> Although it is probable that not every person who attended was actually considering migration at the time, theoretically, at least 30,000 potential migrants from Newcastle-on-Tyne saw the exhibition, a high proportion of who would have been made aware of the possibilities for migration to Australia or become further engaged with the idea of migration to Australia as a result of the town's exhibition.

Lectures were another common way for information about Australia to be disseminated to large audiences. Lecturers spoke to potential migrants about the character of "Typical" Australian people and their values as well as the more practical aspects of life such as education and employment opportunities. Lectures often lasted for several hours. An example of the nature of these lectures was the series delivered across Britain by Walter Hood who had come to Australia in 1939 in order to study its way of life and people. He lived with over thirty Australian families during that time and worked in every state of Australia. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hood delivered one hundred and five lectures on behalf of the DOI in locations ranging from Cornwall in Southern England to Inverness in Scotland.<sup>36</sup> His audiences included Rotary Clubs, schools, youth clubs, Armed Forces organisations, the Workers Education Association and trade unions. He compared the size of Australia to its small population, and informed migrants that most Australians lived in towns and major cities, contrary to the widely-held belief that most Australians lived a pastoral lifestyle.<sup>37</sup> He spoke of Australians' love of the outdoors, how fair wages were the cornerstone of industrial relations in Australia and that the country had strong employment unions to ensure a good living wage was secured for all workers. He also appealed to British audiences by declaring that health, rather than security (security from the possibility of a third European war and the threat of a nuclear confrontation between Western States and the Soviet Union), was the primary concern of Australians and that Australians' love of sport helped them to achieve high standards of health.

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<sup>35</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416, Bonney

<sup>36</sup> These lectures were delivered in approximately a five month period at the beginning on 1948. Mr Hood went on to deliver further lectures but his report was based on the 105 he had given to that point in time.

<sup>37</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1950/5/3549, Hood Walter-Immigration Publicity in the U.K.

These factors were especially appealing to Britons who were weary of war and did not want to be involved in another conflict and also to those who felt restricted to an indoor lifestyle due to weather constraints and perceived overcrowding in British towns and cities. By addressing topics in this manner, Hood's lectures, as well as the many other lecture series given in Britain, were clearly designed to be enticing to migrants. They highlighted aspects of Australia that would be appealing to the British and contributed to the formation of the image of Australia as an attractive society in the eyes of many British people who were unhappy with the prospects of their future lives in Britain.

However, the lectures also emphasized that Australia was not a utopia and that it had many problems that would be similar to those in Britain, such as a housing shortage and some rationing. Migrants were also likely to encounter problems they were not familiar with, like large distances between towns and cities and a lack of options for transport between them. The effectiveness of these lectures was further enhanced by the audiences to whom they were delivered, who took actions such as placing reviews in the local newspapers such as:

Mr. Walter Hood made many of us eager to leave Great Britain and to immigrate to Australia. His word picture of the lives of the people of that great country was vivid and made us long for the open air—especially for a billy-can picnic.<sup>38</sup>

It is fair to say that migrants who wrote articles such as these reinforced the idea of an idyllic lifestyle in Australia. The lectures exemplify the nature of the publicity shown to post-war migrants in Britain: they had been enticed but they had also been warned.

Radio broadcast was another important tool used by Australia to attract British migrants. In the immediate post-war years, broadcasts were made via Australia's overseas broadcasting station Radio Australia. These broadcasts consisted of quarter hour long information segments regarding migration to Australia. They were published on a weekly basis and the broadcasts were repeated so that interested people could tune-in during the morning, afternoon or evening.<sup>39</sup> During the 1950s, the BBC also was employed by the Australian Government to broadcast programs aimed at enticing

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<sup>38</sup> NAA, A436, 1950/5/3549.

<sup>39</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1946/5/5784, Proposals for Regular Short Wave broadcasting to U.K., Correspondence to Mr. Greenhalgh, Secretary of the DOI from A. C. Williams, Director-General, Department of Information.



migrants from Britain to Australia. Correspondence relating to the scripts and revisions of scripts to be used for these BBC broadcasts once again show the desire of the DOI to provide British migrants with accurate information, whilst maintaining its attractive nature. The script to be used in broadcasts in 1952 is an example of both the fact-based approach which the DOI took to migration publicity, and its desire to provide migrants with important information. The broadcast provided general facts about the nature of immigration to Australia since the war's end. Information related to: the numbers of British migrants who had already moved to Australia; the Government's commitment to ensuring that the makeup of the Australian population would remain overwhelmingly British; justifications for the small number of European migrants who were being accepted, the types of skilled work available, the unskilled and rural work available and the country's declining preparedness to receive entire families of migrants as opposed to only single males due to the lack of housing available at the current time.<sup>40</sup> Correspondence between the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) who had prepared the script for the BBC's use and the DOI shows the methodical nature of the DOI's attempts to provide accurate information. The following are some of the suggested adjustments to the script that document this:

Delete words from paragraph three, line seven 'for a married man with one child'. (The basic wage is payable to all adult males irrespective of marital or family status).

Delete from paragraph three, line fourteen, 'Australia is a highly unionised country...as any leader will assure you' and insert the following which it is felt will make the position clearer 'Australia is a highly unionised country. If you are a member of a trade union it is most desirable in your own interests that you obtain and bring with you a clearance certificate from your union. If you are not a union member it will be desirable for you to join an appropriate union on arrival in Australia. Provided you possess the necessary training and experience to work in your field in Australia, and this applies particularly to the skilled trades, you will be readily accepted as a union member. You will find union officials most helpful in offering you advice and guidance'.

These suggestions amongst others are followed by the following paragraph: "I trust you do not feel that the foregoing suggestions are too meticulous, but they are given simply

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<sup>40</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence files, multiple number series (policy matters), 1/1/1922–31/12/1968, Control symbol 261/11/2, BBC Broadcast on 'British Migration', Why does Australia want migrants with emphasis on British - radio broadcast script for airing on the BBC Network in 1952, December, 1951.

to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding on the part of your listeners".<sup>41</sup> This type of correspondence once again demonstrates the commitment on the part of the DOI not to mislead migrants and to provide them with the necessary knowledge to settle permanently and happily in Australia.

British ex-servicemen were highly sought after by Australia in the years immediately following the war's conclusion. Australia offered ex-servicemen free passage and social security benefits in order to encourage them to come to Australia. They were recruited from every area in which British servicemen were stationed at the end of the war, as well as from Britain itself.<sup>42</sup> Many types of Australian publicity and information were specifically designed for British servicemen and a substantial effort was put into attracting them to come to Australia after the war.

An excellent example of the publicity to which British servicemen were exposed and the lengths to which Australia went to encourage their immigration, can be seen in the series of events that Australian migration officials organised in British military camps. In 1949, a series of lectures was undertaken that was specifically aimed at British servicemen. Lectures were arranged for the six different commands of the British Army in the United Kingdom, resulting in a total audience of 16,565 servicemen over a six month period. British troops were given the opportunity to view films about Australia in the days leading up to the lectures. Posters and photographs were displayed around army bases and literature was distributed both prior to and during the lectures. Servicemen who were interested in migration after attending the lectures were immediately given the opportunity to have a migration interview with Australian migration officers.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the period in which these lectures took place, migration officials answered letters received from the servicemen attending the lectures in order to answer the questions that arose.

Having formulated its immigration policy prior to the war's end, the Australian Government was able to begin its publicity campaign to attract servicemen as migrants before the war had concluded. By March 1945, 10,000 copies of the booklet *Know*

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<sup>41</sup> NAA, A445, 261/11/2.

<sup>42</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1948/5/6259, Publicity-Re Establishment Entitlements of UK, Empire other than UK and Allied Service Personnel.

<sup>43</sup> NAA, A436, 1950/5/3549.

*Australia* were being circulated amongst British sailors on ships in and around Australia.<sup>44</sup> Lectures about life in Australia were given and educational movies were being screened in ships' libraries and other locations where British sailors who were on-shore attended regularly. A follow up publication "Designed to win migrants from overseas and from among the British servicemen based in Australia" was in the production stages before the war's end, with the intention that enough copies would be distributed to provide one for every British man serving with the British fleet in Australian waters at that time.<sup>45</sup>

The *Re-establishment* booklet, which was aimed at British servicemen, is an example of highly factual information given by Australia to potential British migrants. However, as well as its informative nature, it was also designed to make Australia attractive to the potential migrants. Some sections of the booklet give details about special services that ex-servicemen from Britain could access in Australia, such as free legal advice, and perhaps far more enticingly, a free set of tools to British ex-serviceman who required them for employment purposes in Australia, paid for by the Australian Government.<sup>46</sup> The booklet outlined the advantages that Australia offered to ex-servicemen and the opportunities that awaited them if they decided to migrate. But, for the most part, the booklet focuses on information that would help servicemen and their families to settle into Australian society. It specifically details the entitlements that British service personnel had under the various pieces of legislation enacted in relation to them by the Australian Government after the war.<sup>47</sup> It also provides information about how to seek further advice after migration to Australia.<sup>48</sup> This booklet, of which many thousands of copies were distributed amongst service personnel, is representative of the dedicated efforts that were made was given on the part of the Australian Government to provide these potential British migrants with factual, useful information

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<sup>44</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1945–31/12/1950, Control symbol 1945/5/225, British Servicemen-Distribution of Australian Information Literature.

<sup>45</sup> NAA, A436, 1945/5/225.

<sup>46</sup> NAA, A436, 1948/5/6259.

<sup>47</sup> Legislation that impacted on British servicemen's social security entitlements in Australia included bills such as the Re Establishment and Employment Act (1945) and Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act (1947).

<sup>48</sup> NAA, A436, 1948/5/6259

and to assist them with the obstacles they might would face upon settlement in Australia.

Posters and photographs were the most common methods used by Australian officials to get migrants in Britain interested in Australia and receptive to further information about migrating to the country. The posters represented themes that the Government was promoting and representatives from the Immigration Advisory Committee, Art Advisory Committee and the Advertising Division of the Treasury Department all had input on their final design.<sup>49</sup> In some cases posters were even designed by members of the Australian public through competitions organised at the DOIs behest and subjected to its approval.<sup>50</sup> The posters used in the late 1940s presented an image of an idyllic lifestyle in Australia. One well known image portrayed in cartoon style depicts a country home with a windmill, pink trees, yellow haystacks and a young child joyfully riding a horse. This poster was created by the DOIN to promote all things Australian to the British public, and was not solely used for the purpose of attracting migrants.<sup>51</sup> Imagery such as this contributed to the positive ‘mood’ in post-war Britain for migration to Australia (which many British migrants refer to when giving reasons for their decision to migrate) as it created an attractive image against the hardships of the immediate post-war conditions in Britain, highlighted by the rationing of goods and services, the damaged and lost infrastructure from the war as well as the emotional toll the war had on the British population.

“Australia and Your Future” was the first series of films produced for post-war migration publicity to entice potential British migrants.<sup>52</sup> The four films in this series were centred upon themes such as work, education and family.<sup>53</sup> Films promoting

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<sup>49</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1945–31/12/1950, Control symbol 1947/5/3028, Publicity-Conditioning Campaign-Posters and Advertising.

<sup>50</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/3028.

<sup>51</sup> NAA, DOIN, Central Office, CP815/1, General correspondence files, two number series, Nov 1944–16 Mar 1950, Control symbol 021.36, Immigration-Acceptance Publicity (Trade Unions).

<sup>52</sup> The content of this series as well as later immigration publicity films was often a controversial topic. For an in depth analysis of the debates that emerged in the creation of these films amongst various government figures and bodies see *Migration Documentary Films, In Post-War Australia* by Liangwen Kuo.

<sup>53</sup> Kuo, *Migration Documentary Films*, 206. Although many migration films, newsreel productions and advertisements were viewed through the course of researching for this

migration to Australia were played extensively throughout multiple cinemas across Britain, including “*Western Gateway*”, “*Pacific Terminal*”, “*Native Earth*” and “*Island Target*”. For example the film “*National Capital*” (which promoted Canberra as a destination for migrants) was being shown in sixty-eight cinemas in March of 1947.<sup>54</sup> Immigration films were designed to attract migrants; they highlighted Australia’s best features and painted a picture of an idyllic lifestyle. This approach to film-making was taken in accordance with the wishes of the DOI and DOIN which made a deliberate decision to focus film production around creating an idyllic image of Australia, rather than using film as a platform to disseminate more meaningful and critical information regarding conditions in Australia, a strategy which had been considered and defended by many involved with the production of these films.<sup>55</sup> An example of this approach can be found in the film “*First Citizen*”, which was designed to inform potential migrants about the education system in Australia. Its script was approved by the Education Sub-Committee of the ANFB and placed an emphasis on addressing the challenges that the Australian education system faced in order to meet its goals of providing equal opportunities to all of its students. These challenges included issues such as education by correspondence, the geographical isolation of Australian students from the majority of the Australian population and the need for additional education and employment training services beyond the realms of traditional schooling. According to Kuo, “*First Citizens* aimed to reflect the Australian education in a faithful manner by presenting, on the one hand, actual situations and difficulties and, on the other, the prospects of future educational development”. The DOI rejected the scripts put forward by the Sub-committee, due to concerns such as:

[T]he immigration film on education in Australia is not appropriate for immigration publicity...Every film in the immigration series must convey a simple message—that Australia is a desirable land in which to live, in other words, such films must sell the particular aspect of the Australian way-of-life it is designed to portray.<sup>56</sup>

This conflict between educationalists and those concerned with immigration publicity shows that the DOI considered film to be a media platform that was not to be used in a

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project, the comments regarding the conflict that existed between the Education Sub-Committee of the ANFB and the DOI are derived from those of Liangwen Kuo in *Migration Documentary Films in Post-War Australia*.

<sup>54</sup> NAA, A436, 1947/5/416.

<sup>55</sup> Kuo, *Migration Documentary Films*, 216.

<sup>56</sup> Kuo, *Migration Documentary Films*, 211.

manner that was in any way critical of Australian society and its institutions or that might place doubts in the minds of potential migrants.

British migrants have fairly criticised the images and messages portrayed to them in Australia's immigration films. Film does appear to be a medium used by the DOI to sell Australia, rather than to provide migrants with sufficient information about the country. As a result, migrants who watched these films could easily have formed high expectations for life in Australia. Film contrasts substantially with other communication media explored earlier in this chapter such as radio, lectures and literature that put much greater emphasis on providing factual and useful information to potential migrants as well as enticing them to come to Australia. However, migrants who were exposed to these films needed only to perform some further research about life in Australia to become informed that the country also had problems and that a successful immigration experience would not necessarily be an easy thing to attain. This research could be done in many ways. The simplest of which was to make enquiries with one of the Australian immigration offices operating in Britain.<sup>57</sup> But many migrants went to greater lengths to get the information they desired about Australia, such as by researching the country for themselves in British libraries, free from the influence of Australian immigration officers, or by making enquiries about both very specific and sometimes generic concerns they had directly to the Australian Government departments that had jurisdiction over the area about which they were interested.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, it must be concluded from available evidence that some Australian immigration films screened in post-war Britain were misleading, in contradiction to the intentions of the overall publicity campaign in Britain, and migrants are justified in their complaints about them.

Australian governments, in line with their policies regarding sourcing migrants of British and/or 'white' racial origins, put greater effort into attracting people from Britain than they did those from other parts of the world. Although some information was distributed in DP camps in the 1940s, the saturation of publicity that took place in

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<sup>57</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence files, multiple number series (policy matters), 1/1/1922–31/12/1968, control number 124/2/31, Technical Selection of Migrants by P. Lawrence. Aust. House, London.

<sup>58</sup> NAA, Department Immigration, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1946/5/2659, Department of Labour and National Service-R King and H Munts.

Britain did not occur in the camps. As the availability of European refugees decreased, publicising Australia in Europe became much more important to aid in achieving the nation's immigration targets. Correspondingly, the dissemination of Australia's publicity that had originally targeted British migrants only was extended throughout the European countries from which Australia was willing to take migrants under its revised policies.

Australia also publicised itself in countries that were part of the British Commonwealth, and therefore contained large numbers of British citizens and British ex-servicemen. India is an example of a country from which Australia tried to lure British servicemen. The documents that describe the Australian migration publicity campaign in India also demonstrate the Government's ongoing commitment to the 'White Australia Policy' in the 1950s and highlight its determination to attract British servicemen from India, but not local Indians. This aim can clearly be seen in the fact that they halted publicity efforts in the country after 1948, as there were no longer the vast numbers of British servicemen as they had been at the war's end; they had left the sub-continent for a variety of reasons, including migration to Australia in some cases, meaning that India was "...Unlikely... [to] remain a considerable source of migrants admissible under present migration regulations [White Australia Policy]".<sup>59</sup> Correspondence from L.G Wigmore, written shortly after a stint as the Press Attache to the Australian High Commissioners Office in Delhi, to the Chief Publicity Officer, Mr K. Murphy in Canberra, instructs the DOI that it would not be advisable to advertise extensively in Indian newspapers and periodicals, as doing so would "...Emphasise what Indians are apt to consider invidious distinctions between themselves and Europeans".<sup>60</sup>

Increased migration from the United States of America (US) was also sought due to the significant development in the relationship between Australia and the US during the Second World War. This enhanced defence based post-war relationship meant it was natural for Australia to look to the US for migrants, as one of the key aims of the populate or perish campaign was to increase Australia's capacity to defend itself.

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<sup>59</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Correspondence Files, Class 5, British Migrants, 1/1/1945-31-12-1950, Control symbol 1948/5/3045, Immigration publicity prepared for India

<sup>60</sup> NAA, A436, 1948/5/3045

Besides the defence relationship, the US became a desired country for Australia to attract migrants from in the post-war era because it was thought to be culturally and linguistically similar to Australia and above all because millions of US citizens had ethnic origins that aligned with the 'White Australia Policy'. The publicity used to attract American migrants and the information given to them was in many cases exactly the same as that which was originally designed for British migrants.<sup>61</sup> By 1948, Australian News and Information bureaus (NIB) in the US had detailed brochures based on conditions in all of Australia's states to distribute to Americans who expressed interest in migration to Australia.<sup>62</sup> Several thousand US migrants came to Australia in the post-war period. Many of them were ex-servicemen who had spent time in Australia during the war and had who in many cases married Australian women.

Immigration officials representing both Commonwealth and state governments travelled aboard migrant ships in order to prepare migrants for their arrival in Australia, and assist them by providing advice regarding housing and employment amongst the many other queries that migrants had. Most feedback from British migrants aboard these ships was positive regarding the helpfulness of the Commonwealth's Immigration and Welfare officials. However, on some journeys, particularly during the early years of the immigration program, problems did arise that led to the migrants being unsure of what they were supposed to do upon arrival in Australia, and in some cases poor advice was given by welfare officers to migrants. One example from the early years that was later dealt with to ensure accurate information was being given to migrants was the removal of volunteer lecturers aboard migrant ships. By 1948, the DOI stopped this practice due to inaccurate information being provided by these volunteers, such as when a migrant who was a painter by profession arrived in Australia having been convinced to invest all his savings in a pig farm, in favour of having official welfare officers present all lectures and other forms of distribution of information.<sup>63</sup> In June 1951, a decision was also taken to end the practice of Commonwealth Employment Officers

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<sup>61</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A436, Class 5 Correspondence Files, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 48/6/5/5748, Housing Difficulties of Migrants, Complaints re.

<sup>62</sup> NAA, A436, 1948/08/2045.

<sup>63</sup> NAA, Department of Interior and DOI's Central Offices, A436, Class 5 Correspondence Files, British Migrants, 1/1/1920–31/12/1957, Control symbol 1949/5/6846, "Commonwealth Employment Service"-(Department of Labour & National Service) Officers Travelling on Migrant Ships.



interviewing migrants aboard ship. This process would wait until their arrival at the various hostels, where a more accurate assessment of their skills and the available employment opportunities could be conducted.<sup>64</sup> However, some states including South Australia continued to send employment officers aboard when migrant ships reached their ports so that they could move as many people into employment as quickly as possible.<sup>65</sup>

One of the most frequent complaints of British migrants who came to Australia in the 1940s and 1950s was the difficulty in obtaining housing. Accusations regarding the misinformation regarding the housing situation in Australia were common. British migrants expressed their frustrations with both the physical publicity and often the personnel who delivered it to them, such as employees at Australia House in London. In 1948, B.C. Wall, a Commonwealth Migration Officer informed the Secretary for the DOI of an accusation against a specific member of staff at Australia House and confirmed that many complaints of this nature had been received from British migrants. The migrant, Mrs C. Hillary, accused the Australia House official of telling her that housing was readily available for purchase in Australia. Mr Wall expressed to the Secretary that he felt sorry for this family who had clearly been deceived and asked that steps be taken immediately to inform officials at Australia House of the actual situation regarding purchasing homes in Australia.<sup>66</sup> This shows the desire by those working in Australia's DOI to provide accurate information to British migrants and demonstrates that when inaccurate information was passed along, it was far more likely to be the result of migration officials in Britain having outdated information than through any deliberate attempt to deceive them in order to encourage their migration.

At the same time that DOI records confirm that in some cases inaccurate information was being distributed by Australia House officials, they also make it clear that in many other cases, the complaints of some British migrants were considered to be unfounded. This included complaints regarding the crucial issue of housing availability in Australia. Mr Noel W. Lamidey, the Chief Migration Officer at Australia House in London in 1950, vigorously defended the conduct of his departmental staff at Australia

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<sup>64</sup> NAA, A436, 1949/5/6846.

<sup>65</sup> NAA, A436, 1949/5/6846.

<sup>66</sup> NAA, A436, 48/5/5/5748.

House in response to accusations they were distributing inaccurate information regarding the housing situation in Australia. He asserted that:

[E]ach officer that deals with the public is well aware of the acute housing position in Australia...it is unlikely that any person could gain a false impression or incorrect information especially concerning the difficulty of securing accommodation....Investigation leads me to believe that information issued from this office regarding this problem is both authentic and accurate.<sup>67</sup>

Members of the public and Australian business community also objected to the complaints regarding housing by British migrants. One example of this is provided by the R. B. Davies Company, which sponsored British migrants and their families to come to Australia and work in their business as manufacturers of building and general hardware supplies. Writing to the Secretary of the DOI, the company alleged that families which they had sponsored had arrived in Australia and were now complaining about the housing that the company had provided for them upon arrival. The company stressed that it was explicitly clear about the difficulties to be faced in finding housing in Australia at short notice, and points out that the company had sponsored other British migrants previously, who had found suitable housing after short stays in the accommodation provided to them by the company. They accused these migrants of requiring ‘spoon-feeding’, having unsatisfactory attitudes and they assert that migrants with a more pioneering attitude than those in question were much better at adapting themselves to Australian conditions.<sup>68</sup> Some British migrants also encouraged their countryman to engage more substantially with the information available to them, such as Arnold Kay, who said “I advise every migrant to listen carefully to everything they are told about Australia, and to read the pamphlets given to them before they leave England, it is very necessary”.<sup>69</sup>

Constant revision and updating to the publicity and information viewed by British migrants regarding Australia was carried out in the post-war period. The work of the CIACPC clearly demonstrates Australian governments’ commitment to providing factual and useful information to British migrants, as well as enticing publicity,

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<sup>67</sup> NAA, A436, 1950/5/2133.

<sup>68</sup> NAA, A436, 1948/5/6259.

<sup>69</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A12111, Immigration Photographic Archive, 1946–Today, Control symbol 1/1967/16/87, Immigration-Migrants in employment-Commercial.

examples of which can be found throughout this chapter. Correspondence from CIACPC files to the NIB operating in London in August 1952 reveal that they were prepared to remove very large amounts of publicity from Britain due to inaccuracies, despite the great costs and time that would be required to produce new material. The types of actions taken include but are not limited to: the cessation of distribution and removal from circulation of information booklets such as *Australia and Your Future* and *Australia in Brief* (British and Australian circulation editions), the republishing of these booklets without the parts considered to be inaccurate, halting productions of booklets such as *Settling In* to give state publicity bureaus time to refine their contents, withdrawing all posters that alluded to an abundance of jobs and/or employment opportunities and declaring that all materials distributed from Australia House in London must first be approved by the DOI in Canberra to ensure that all publications matched up to Commonwealth Government policy and actual conditions.<sup>70</sup>

Whilst showing the ways by which information given to British migrants was improved throughout the post-war period, these files also reveal that information in circulation could quickly become inaccurate. This problem was usually due to changes in how the Australian or British economies were faring at any given time. Economic trends generally changed more rapidly than publicity and information was able to be altered, sometimes creating a lag; even information that was created with the intention of being accurate and helpful could rapidly cease to be such. Migrants engaging with material that had become outdated due to economic or other factors may have gained incorrect impressions regarding various factors in Australia. In cases where decisions to migrate were made based on outdated information, migrants could arrive in Australia unaware of the true nature of economic conditions, which could have significant impacts on their abilities to find housing and employment, amongst other things.

Changing economic and social conditions in Australia and Britain not only changed the information that Australia was distributing, but forced the Government to find new ways to attract British migrants. In the early 1950s, when the Australian economy quickly changed from one of many employment opportunities to one of few

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<sup>70</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence files, multiple number series (policy matters), 1/1/1922–31/12/1968, Control symbol 140/5/16, Migration Publicity Abroad.

employment opportunities, the flow of migrants from Britain began to decrease, as the British could see that the potential for a better life in Australia was disappearing whilst at the same time the British economy continued to revive itself in the post-war era. In 1954, Queen Elizabeth II toured Australia, and the Government used this visit as a publicity exercise. This visit and its ability to inspire people from Britain to migrate to Australia were particularly significant as the visit occurred during a period in which economic conditions had diminished Australia's image as a desirable place to which to migrate.

The last opportunity which British migrants had to seek and receive information about Australia or a particular state was on their journey to Australia. For those migrants who came to Australia in the later period by plane, information was not generally available due to the rapid nature of the journey to Australia. However, reports from welfare and information officers travelling on the migration ship HMT Asturias in 1952 shows that along with a general welcome they gave near the start of the voyage, they also conducted a series of lectures throughout the voyage that were attended in large numbers and aimed to provide migrants with information about each of the Australian states, employment prospects within them, conditions at the migrant hostels and various other pieces of advice about the Australian way of life. They stated that they made contact with almost every passenger on board to address questions that they had and that magazines and other information pamphlets had been handed out at the lectures and were readily available to the passengers throughout the voyage.<sup>71</sup> Reports from subsequent voyages reveal that a library dedicated to information about Australia was open for two hours each day, and that the books were in such high demand on board that by the voyage's end they needed to be replaced. The officers also continued to note that almost all of the migrants aboard spoke with them regarding life in Australia. They were able to ensure coverage by taking a roll call at lectures and chasing up those who had not attended.<sup>72</sup>

The majority of post-war migrants arrived in Australia via ship and thus they had a prolonged period of access to information about Australia during their voyages.

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<sup>71</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence files, multiple number series (policy matters), 1/1/1922–31/12/1968, Control symbol, 274/1/1, HMT ASTURIAS-reports on voyage by welfare and information officers.

<sup>72</sup> NAA, A445, 274/1/1

The information available aboard was in some cases the same as what had been available in Britain. However, migrants did not have to weigh this against the more general publicity to which they were exposed to in Britain, as they already had committed to the journey to Australia. They also had access to information and welfare officers who represented the DOI. State information officers were also present on some voyages. These officers aimed to give migrants the most up-to-date information about conditions in their intended destination so that they would be able to quickly assimilate to the Australian lifestyle and achieve important milestones such as finding employment and housing.

Although many British migrants have claimed that the publicity and information distributed by Australia was insufficient or inaccurate, this perspective was far from universal. It is understandably the case that those migrants who were unhappy with the conditions in Australia, and therefore complained most earnestly, are the ones whose opinions regarding publicity have generally been recorded. However, this negativity was certainly not the opinion of all British migrants. When asked about their opinions of the publicity and information available, interviewees frequently have pointed out that it was unrealistic to expect publicity to be truly representative of any given society. When asked if in hindsight he thought the publicity was misleading, John Cochrane stated “No not really, I mean obviously in a situation like that you know whoever is seeking to attract migrants is going to try and put the best spin on it”.<sup>73</sup> Another couple, Colin and Sylvia Davies, also alluded to the idea that information from governments would naturally exaggerate the good and down play the bad. They mentioned that after receiving and reading all of the information given to them by Australia House, they set out to attain further information in order to be properly prepared for life in Australia. They considered themselves to be well-informed regarding the Australian lifestyle and remarked that upon arrival, the only thing that surprised them was the amount of corrugated iron.<sup>74</sup> Another view put forth by migrants who considered themselves to be well-informed, was that the people who were very unhappy when they arrived were the people who had not asked any questions. Rita Snelling said of those people: “This is the difference with the people that did [not ask questions]. [They] were very unhappy when

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<sup>73</sup> John Cochrane, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>74</sup> Colin and Sylvia Davies, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

they came. They didn't ask the questions, they just assumed you can't, you've got to ask the questions...I think we were always given the right answers if we asked the right questions".<sup>75</sup>

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This chapter has shown that the publicity and information distributed by Australian governments in the post-war period was not intended to deceive potential migrants. On the contrary, it was conceived and designed with the very best of intentions by the newly formed DOI, against a background of not wanting to repeat mistakes of the past and with keen awareness that its task as a department was to ensure migrants would settle permanently and become productive members of the Australian community. This chapter has documented considerable evidence showing that the publicity and other information being given to British migrants was constantly reviewed and updated to reflect real conditions as they were in Australia. However, it cannot be denied that in some cases, British migrants were given information that was inaccurate regarding conditions in Australia and that some forms of publicity provided sensationalised accounts of the real situation. The distribution of inaccurate information occurred sporadically throughout the post-war period and was usually the result of changing economic conditions in Australia or Britain. In particular, publicity features such as posters and films about Australia were clearly designed to be as enticing as possible for the potential migrant. However, it was not the government's intention that migrants should make their decision to emigrate based upon one source. There were many ways that prospective migrants could gain knowledge about Australia, including radio broadcasts, lectures and visiting Australia House. Even in cases where migrants did not pursue these sources, Australia House sent information packages to all migrants who were approved to migrate to Australia prior to embarkation. Australian migration officials in Britain as well as their contacts in Australia were happy to help migrants who had questions regarding many different aspects of life in Australia. It is clear that there were avenues through which extra information, or confirmation of what they had been told, could be sought. Failure to engage with all of the available information was a key contributor to perceptions that British migrants were routinely misled in order to entice them to Australia.

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<sup>75</sup> Geoff and Rita Snelling, interviewed by J.Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia.

# Chapter Three: Post-War British Environments and Their Effect on Expectations

Throughout this chapter, there is regular use of the term, migrant's 'environment', and the various environmental factors that affected migrants' experiences. Therefore, it is important to begin by establishing exactly what constitutes a migrant's 'environment'. Generally, an environment is said to be "The surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal or plant lives or operates".<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this and subsequent chapters in this thesis, the term 'environment' will be used in reference to any or all of the factors/variables that impacted on an individual's experiences prior to migrating to Australia, during their initial settlement in the country and their perspectives in hindsight of their migration experiences.

Most critical to individual migrants' expectations of Australia was the environment and personal circumstances from which they came.<sup>2</sup> The expectations that British migrants had in turn were critical in shaping reactions to the various forms of publicity (discussed previously) to which they may have been exposed, as well as shaping their perceptions of Australia after settlement. Throughout this chapter, different British environments from which migrants came are discussed, and their effects on migrants' expectations for Australia are shown in comparison with the effects of publicity. This analysis demonstrates how environmental variables in the country from which a person emigrated form the basis of their personal expectations, and shows that expectations based on migrants' environments in Britain, rather than publicity, often determined the outcome of their migration experiences. In this chapter, oral histories conducted specifically for this research, as well as oral histories from previous research and other sources of migrants' opinions are examined. They are used to compare a hypothesised list of factors that shaped expectations as identified by the

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<sup>1</sup> "Oxford Dictionaries: Language Matters", Oxford University Press, accessed 12/6/2015, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/environment>.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jenkins, *We Came to Australia* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1969), 25; *Ten Pound Poms*, 28.

existing literature. It is argued that their personal circumstances in Britain played a greater role than publicity in forming their expectations for Australia.

Of the twenty-two reasons noted by Thomson and Hammerton in their research as causes for migration amongst a sample of two hundred and thirty three, the two categories potentially related to government activities, strong encouragement from Australia and Australian immigration publicity, were cited by only twenty one migrants and/or migrant families.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, “strong encouragement from Australia” may not in all cases have referred to publicity, but to encouragement given to migrants from Australian people with whom they had contact. Of two hundred and thirty three respondents, only one migrant or migrant family listed publicity as their primary motivation for migration to Australia. Hence it is critical to examine other factors beyond publicity that affected British migrants’ expectations, topics that have been neglected in scholarly and popular literature relative to criticisms of publicity. This chapter focuses on these factors, and documents their impact on the formation of migrants’ expectations.

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It is obvious that migrants use the environment to which they were accustomed in their home country as their main reference point upon which they assess the new environments in which they find themselves after migrating to another country. Britain is a nation of many varied social, cultural, and economic environments, and obviously despite similarities, no two sets of migrants’ expectations, from amongst the approximate 1.6 million British people who migrated to Australia between 1945 and 1982, were the same.<sup>4</sup> Whether they were looking to improve their quality of life or migrated initially for holidaying and adventure, each migrant’s expectations of Australia were largely shaped by the homes and communities which they were leaving in Britain.

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<sup>3</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 65.

<sup>4</sup> R. Appleyard, A. Ray and A. Segal, *The Ten Pound Immigrants* (London: Boxtree, 1988), 160.



The presentations of conditions by many texts outline the problems that faced Britain at the end of World War Two.<sup>5</sup> For example, in *Austerity Britain* (2007), historian David Kynaston describes many of the deprivations that British people endured as well as problems facing the British State in 1945, such as the rationing of; meat, butter, lard, margarine, sugar, tea, cheese, jam, eggs, sweets, soap and clothes. On top of the impact of three quarters of a million destroyed homes, seven million homes without hot water supply and overcrowded Victorian era housing slums.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the National Health Service did not come into effect until 5 July 1948, despite being legislated in 1946. The sudden post-war influx of immigrants, particularly West Indians, to those areas of Britain that already contained many poor working class families, further exacerbated perceptions that life in post-war Britain was not improving.<sup>7</sup> These problems, amongst many others, impacted significantly on British people and were significant reasons for more than 400,000 Britons registering for emigration at Australia House in 1947—a time when the Australian publicity campaign was in its infancy and still primarily aimed at ex-servicemen—in the hope of gaining assisted passages to Australia.<sup>8</sup>

The first factor discussed in this chapter is the effect of a migrant's physical environment. It examines how expectations formed differently for various migrants, such as those from urban backgrounds opposed to those from small towns or rural areas of Britain. Migrants from British cities and the highly urbanised areas that usually surrounded those cities account for the majority of post-war immigrants to Australia. Roughly eighty four per cent of British assisted migrants were English, and of those, more than a quarter came from the London area and the South East region surrounding it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Judt, *Post-war.*; Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); K. O. Morgan, *Labour in Power: 1945–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Peter Calvovoressi, *The British Experience: 1945–75* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1979); Nicholas Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State* (Hammersmith, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain: 1945–51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 19,20.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982), 55, 167.

<sup>8</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 30

<sup>9</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 35.

For instance, Janet Coolen was eighteen when she came to Adelaide in 1964. Together with her family, she stayed in the Elder Park Hostel before moving to the new town of Elizabeth to the north of Adelaide. Janet only recalled seeing a few posters that advertised Australia as a migrant destination and said most of her knowledge of the country at the time was based on the songs of Rolf Harris such as *Tie me Kangaroo Down, Sport*. Largely uninfluenced by Australian publicity no doubt due to her age, Janet noted that she did not have high expectations for conditions at the hostel, as she expected it to be comparable to a Butlin's Holiday Camp in England, where her family had holidayed during her youth. She based her concept of what the hostel would be like on this camp, and as a result was satisfied with the conditions there. This experience of things being as she had expected at the hostel contrasts starkly to the shock she received when her family moved to Elizabeth.

Janet had grown up in the Roman town of Chester, England. She found that some aspects of her new environment at Elizabeth were not what she expected. She spoke of Chester being "A beautiful town", and how she was shocked to come to a place where "Everything was new", after growing up in a town "Full of Roman ruins".<sup>10</sup> The newness of Elizabeth did not actually upset her, but nonetheless Janet's experience reflects how the differences in her family's English home as opposed to their first Australian home could shock a migrant, despite the difference (in this case in terms of modern buildings and architecture) not necessarily being negative ones.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, to Janet's parents, the newness of Elizabeth was a significant part of the reason they chose to settle there. Janet recalled that their home in England had been very cold and that her mother had regularly suffered from bouts of bronchitis. The expectation that Australia's warm climate would help migrants be free of conditions such as bronchitis and asthma was a common theme that emerged in the Hostel Stories project interviews, especially among British migrants. As a consequence of this expectation, Janet's parents expressed excitement upon viewing Elizabeth: "When they saw these modern houses, they thought that's for us because it was all on one level and heating and cooling was really easy and for those reasons they didn't want to go for an older

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<sup>10</sup> Janet Coolen, interviewed by J. Madden, 2012, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>11</sup> Coolen Interview, 2012.

place”.<sup>12</sup> In this instance, the contrast between the physical environment from which the Coolen family and the one to which they came in South Australia affected members of the family in different ways. Whilst Janet was shocked by the newness of the buildings and particularly their new home, her parents were pleased by the immediate opportunity that their home in Elizabeth offered them to improve upon the quality of life that they had in Britain.

Sixteen year old Geoff Hake’s introduction to South Australia was being awoken from his cabin on board the ship he had travelled on to Australia and being taken to the Gepps Cross Hostel by his parents, who had migrated two years earlier and left him in England to complete his schooling. At the time, the Gepps Cross Hostel was located at the northernmost extremity of Adelaide’s metropolitan sprawl, giving it a feeling of remoteness and seclusion. Geoff was shocked upon his arrival because the conditions he had come to were so different to his previous experiences of life in Britain:

We had some quite nice homes in the UK. In various towns in counties in the midlands; Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire around there. And the home I left for the last two years was a very, very nice house indeed which was owned by my uncle and auntie in a town called Mansfield in Nottinghamshire. Coming from that sort of environment to a series of Nissen huts in a hostel called Gepps Cross was a massive and major culture shock. Not one for the better I might add.<sup>13</sup>

Geoff’s initial expectations of accommodation standards in Australia were formed by the homes and environments to which he was acclimatised in Britain. Geoff confirmed this conclusion by explaining how, as a teenager he had no interest in Australian publicity, and does not recall having seen, read or heard any. Geoff is an example of a migrant who, in the absence of any specific expectations, built his personal expectations upon the environments to which he was accustomed in Britain. He was shocked upon arrival at Gepps Cross Hostel, and unsatisfied with the living arrangements of the hostel environment during his time there.

Geoff’s expectations also had been influenced by a memorable and very enjoyable journey to Australia onboard the migrant ship *Strathfield*. When speaking of the journey, he stated “From what I can recall it was absolutely wonderful. Bearing in

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<sup>12</sup> Coolen Interview, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Hakes Interview, 2014.

mind as a young kid [sixteen] I'd never been on a large boat before so the entire experience was brilliant". Geoff also spoke of his brush with celebrities on board the Strathfield:

On the boat...were six members of the West Indian cricket side who had been playing in the UK in the summer of 1959/60. Some of these players used to get out on the deck and play deck cricket with rope nets all around them and we as young kids were quite fascinated by that and we used to go out and watch them play and talk to them and get their autographs.<sup>14</sup>

For a young cricket fan like Geoff, meeting players of the calibre of Sir Garfield Sobers and Wesley Hall was an exhilarating experience. Experiences like this one played into the sense of adventure that Geoff and many other young migrants had when they left Britain for Australia. Incidents such as this as well as the voyage in general—as the starting points of young peoples' experiences as migrants—created a sense of positivity for what Australia would be like beyond what they had been expecting before leaving Britain. Consequently, in Geoff's case, the adventure of the voyage had the effect of heightening the sense of disappointment felt upon his arrival at the migrant hostel, which he described as "A small horribly cramped tin shed with not enough room to swing a cat, let alone two adults and five kids and coming from the lovely home that I'd come from. I felt that my initial reception into Australian life was really quite disappointing".<sup>15</sup>

Whilst Geoff's initial reaction to life at Gepps Cross Hostel was negative, he soon made friends and found employment, which had a positive impact on his feelings regarding South Australia. Geoff has since spent the majority of his life in South Australia. However, for his parents, the conditions which they encountered upon arrival and the lives that they led in Australia were difficult and unsatisfying, resulting in their return to Britain eleven years later. Geoff believed that his mother in particular had been unhappy from the moment that she arrived and said his dad had described Gepps Cross as a "Hellhole". Due to his experiences and those of other migrants with whom he associated, Geoff believed that for the migrants of his parents' generation who came to the hostel environment:

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<sup>14</sup> Hakes Interview, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Hakes Interview, 2014.

Survival probably was the name of the game because certainly for the parents it was very, very, very hard going because most families that I came across on Gepps had left you know decent jobs, decent houses in the UK. They'd come to Australia for a better life for themselves and more specifically for their kids, and their introduction to Australia was what to them was a living hell. They were just plonked in various migrant hostels, pretty much left to make their own way and fend for themselves and a lot of them...described it as the worst possible way to get on board in a new country....We [Geoff and his migrant peers] didn't have the baggage our parents had, we didn't know what to expect so we just accepted the fact that we were living in tin huts...but for our parents who had come from a much better environment in the UK it probably was just a question of survival.<sup>16</sup>

Lester Cannon, who was ten years old when his parents brought him to Adelaide in 1951, also noted the effects that a previous environment had on expectations in his family through his and his parents' reactions to the Rosewater Hostel. In Lester's case, he compared the conditions at Rosewater to the other hostels in which he and his parents had briefly stayed at in other states, rather than to the environment which they had left in Britain. He expected Rosewater to be an improvement on the other hostels which his expectations were based on, rather than anything that he had been told about the Rosewater hostel in particular, which was very little.

Some migrants, such as Colin and Sylvia Davies who arrived in 1965, ensured that they were well informed about Australia before arrival. Having applied for migration to Australia and reviewing all of the pamphlets and information that were subsequently sent to them from Australia House, the Davies decided to research Australia further through their local public library, in order to be as well informed as possible about the country to which they were going. They interacted with the information given to them by the Australian Government, but realised that it was not likely to be fully reflective of day-to-day life in Australia. Subsequently, they did not let it shape their expectations for Australia. For them, the environment from which they originated created the expectations they held for Australia.

The Davies family found it easier to settle in Adelaide because the area to which they had come in South Australia (Glenelg Hostel in Adelaide) reminded them of Margate, England, where they had lived before migrating. Like Margate, Glenelg Hostel was in a beachside area. The Davies family intimated that as well as the

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<sup>16</sup> Hakes Interview, 2014.

beachside culture of the area, they thought that “Jetty Road [the main shopping and entertainment street of Glenelg] may have reminded us of a bit of High Street and the town where we lived”.<sup>17</sup> They were also pleased with Glenelg because they considered it to be close to the city centre, which was easy to access via the available public transport. When asked if Glenelg lived up to their expectations, Colin replied “I think so. I don’t think it was really much different to what we left behind. We got all the conveniences you needed with the shops. We could catch the bus into town if we needed to”.<sup>18</sup> In the case of the Davies, being introduced to Australia via a familiar environment allowed them to settle easily into life in their new community. In his written memoirs, Colin noted that a lack of familiarity between a migrant’s home in Britain and his or her new home in Australia affected many migrants’ perceptions of Australia negatively. He thought migrants from the north of Britain were likely to be more unsatisfied with Australia than others because:

[T]heir lifestyle must have been different [to migrants from southern England] their lifestyle...centred around going to the clubs. Working mens’ clubs and their social life and there wasn’t the same thing here [lack of social and entertainment clubs] so many of them found it really hard to settle and couldn’t and they...some of them went back...There was a lot of disgruntled migrants, I don’t know what they expected really.<sup>19</sup>

Colin and Sylvia’s thoughts regarding Glenelg demonstrate that their expectations regarding their physical environment in Australia were based on the environment from which they had come in England. Furthermore, when hypothesising about other migrants, particularly those who returned to England, Colin noted that their decisions reflected the lack of opportunities for them to have lifestyles in Australia that were similar to those that they had in Britain.

Dorothy Bell came to Adelaide from Liverpool with her husband and children in June of 1971. Like the Davies, Dorothy and her husband researched the Australian states extensively before they left Britain, rather than basing their expectations of Australia on the publicity with which they had been “Bombarded [with] for years”, and came to the conclusion that South Australia was by far the best place for them to

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<sup>17</sup> Davies Interview, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Davies Interview, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Davies Interview, 2014.

settle.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Dorothy researched different areas of Adelaide and became determined to live in Glenelg. Upon settling there, she found the Glenelg area to be a very good environment for her and her family. Due to her research about the area, Dorothy knew what to expect of Glenelg, and it matched her expectations of the area. Dorothy even went to the extent of writing “Glenelg Hostel please” on her migration application. Whether this request was the reason that her family was placed in the Glenelg Hostel upon arrival in Adelaide is not known, but it shows that she and her family were very aware of the type of environment in which they wanted to inhabit.

Margaret Lindley and her husband came to Adelaide from Thornton Cleveleys, near Blackpool in England’s north in April of 1971. During her teenage years in Britain, Margaret became fixated on the idea of living in Australia, largely thanks to a geography teacher who was very enthusiastic and shared many positive stories regarding Australia. Upon arrival in Adelaide, the Lindleys were placed at Pennington Hostel. Margaret’s opinion of Pennington was extremely negative. She asserted that she:

[H]ated it. Absolutely hated it [and her reasoning for that was that] you couldn’t walk to the beach or anything and I really hated it, hated it and that’s why we went straightaway and said we need to be—want to be—we want to be at Glenelg...It [Pennington] was dark, dingy not a nice feeling.<sup>21</sup>

They had found Pennington to be deeply unsatisfactory and were grateful that after requesting a move to the Glenelg Hostel a place was quickly found for them there. Their reason for requesting Glenelg was because they perceived it to be similar to the area they had left in Thornton Cleveleys. Margaret said that:

I did live by the beach in England and that’s why we wanted to be at Glenelg because we knew that was the beach area because we were used to that. But the houses were two storied over there [England], pretty cramped, small, small roads. You’ve got cars on either side. We just noticed how wide the roads were here and the openness and even though it was April, the blue sky!<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Dorothy Bell, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret Lindley, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>22</sup> Lindley Interview, 2014.

There were also aspects of life in Glenelg that did not compare favourably with Thornton Cleveleys. Margaret felt that:

[I]t was quaint compared to what I was used to in England. I guess I was used to hopping on a train and going to Manchester...well Manchester was like Melbourne where there's big shops...I found that really hard to take at first but you get used to it.<sup>23</sup>

Living in a place where they felt a familiarity with their English home helped migrants to settle successfully; it also allowed them to enjoy the positive differences of their new environment in comparison with the old, such as the open spaces and brilliant weather, but also to cope with the disappointments, like the quaintness of Adelaide.

Each of these examples highlights the impact that migrants' environments in Britain could have had upon their initial experiences in South Australia. They show the importance that migrants placed upon finding familiarity, even in a situation where they chose to uproot their lives and move to a country on the other side of the world.

The financial standing of a family or individual is frequently given as prime motivators for emigration. Migrants from all levels of the British social structure came to Australia, but those from the working and lower middle classes comprised the vast majority.<sup>24</sup> This preponderance of working class migrants reflects the significance of economic difficulties as a determining factor upon peoples' decisions to migrate to Australia. Migrants' financial situations greatly influenced the expectations they held for Australia. In almost all cases where migrants perceived themselves to be struggling, they looked to Australia as an escape from the cycle of poverty, in which they thought they would become entrenched if they stayed in Britain. Financial hardship was far more likely to inspire migration than exposure to publicity, though many of those who considered migration because of their financial situation were swayed by the attractive image of Australia being portrayed in Britain at the time. However, migrants did not expect to become rich in Australia. Rather, they were simply looking for improvement in their financial standing in comparison to what they had been accustomed in Britain.

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<sup>23</sup> Lindley Interview, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 35.



Nineteen year old Terry Howard, who came to Australia in December of 1951, recalled the difficulty of his family's life in Britain prior to their migration, and how that had influenced his parents decision to migrate:

The principal reason was the fact that England was very difficult. My parents had a guest house in the south of England and were finding things very hard to manage. It was not a good place to be. And I think [they] believed that my sister and myself would have a better future if we came to some other country. And it was resolved eventually that we would come to Australia.<sup>25</sup>

Catherine Barber described how, prior to migrating in 1963/4, her family was aware of the opportunities for migration to Australia, and how they knew that going to Australia was 'the mood' in Britain in the early post-war period. However, it was only when her family was faced with financial hardship that they seriously considered migration: "I think basically the employment situation for my Dad was looking a bit risky and, you know, for the first time in his life he was possibly facing being redundant without a job".<sup>26</sup> The possibility of her father being unemployed forced the family to search for an alternative lifestyle. Thanks to their knowledge of Australian publicity, they were aware that migration to Australia was a viable option, but it was the financial pressure that inspired their decision to migrate.

John Cochrane's parents also found that they were struggling financially in Britain. According to John, the reason behind his father's decision to bring the family to Australia was:

[M]y father had lost his job at one point, he'd attempted to start his own business, had to borrow money, wasn't successful and he finished up with a very low paying job which was all he could get at the time. So basically there were very limited prospects and opportunities for him and my mother was also working as well to try and make ends meet.<sup>27</sup>

Colin Davies noted that he was very happy with the wages he received working in Australia as compared to England:

In England I was earning fourteen pounds a week. When I arrived here I was earning twenty-five pound a week which was great...it [hostel

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<sup>25</sup> Terry Howard, interviewed by S. Mann, 2011, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>26</sup> Catherine Barber, interviewed by L. Russell, 2000, British-Australian Post-War migration research project, University of Sussex, Sussex.

<sup>27</sup> Cochrane Interview, 2014.

accommodation] cost us about twelve pounds a week out of my twenty-five pounds so we never struggled with that at all.<sup>28</sup>

This doubling of wages for similar work allowed Colin and his wife to save money while at the hostel so that they could eventually purchase their own home, which was something they did not feel would have been possible had they remained in England:

In the six years we'd lived in that rented house [In England] we'd saved sixty pounds so there was no chance of saving twelve hundred pounds [a figure they had been quoted as a deposit for a home they considered buying in England]. So that was another reason why we felt why we had benefitted coming to Adelaide or coming to Australia was we could buy our own house.<sup>29</sup>

Home ownership also made a significant contribution to Irene and Lesley Coulson's decision to migrate to Australia: "We didn't have the money to buy. I was twenty and Les was twenty-one and so we didn't have the money but we had a beautiful home".<sup>30</sup> The Coulsons were prepared to leave their "Beautiful" rented home because it was not a home they could ever afford to buy and instead came to Australia to chase their dreams of home ownership.

Dorothy Bell and her husband struggled financially in Britain even though her husband earned what she considered to be a good wage. There were many cost of living pressures which had a significant influence on their decision to migrate:

The situation in England at that time was such that meat was becoming more and more expensive, all costs were going up and even though my husband had a well-paying job we found it...were finding it hard to manage.<sup>31</sup>

Dorothy's husband died shortly after their arrival in Adelaide and so as a single parent, she had to make do on a small income with whatever assistance she could gain from the Government. Dorothy felt that her "Can-do attitude" was typical of other migrants who came to Australia to escape the financial hardships and lack of opportunities in Liverpool. She believed that people from her area were not accustomed to a great deal of financial freedom or material comfort, and were therefore much better at adapting to difficult circumstances in Australia. She described the Liverpool attitude as being one

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<sup>28</sup> Davies Interview, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Davies Interview, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Coulson Interview, 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Bell Interview, 2014.

where you “Just got on with it” and that you would “Manage one way or the other” in comparison to migrants from other areas of Britain, who according to her, expected more because they had originated from areas of greater wealth.<sup>32</sup>

Before their migration in 1971, the Snellings were significantly influenced by a combination of their financial position in England as well as social and industrial issues in Britain at the time, which left them uncertain regarding their futures prospects:

It was pretty hard at the time because our three children were very young. And it was more or less the winter of discontent as they later called it because there was a lot of trouble with the [British] Government and the unions, so the power would go off for three or four hours at a time, because of strike and various reasons. It was also very hard—even though Geoff had a good job—you know reasonable pay, to manage on it. The house we lived in was a corporation three-bedroomed house, but even though we’d been married eight years when we came here, we still didn’t own a fridge, or a washing machine.<sup>33</sup>

The Snellings came to the decision to migrate after seeing an advertisement in the paper for the Royal Australian Air Force that appealed to them and offered work for Geoff, for which he was accepted. Hence their decision was primarily influenced by the financial constraint in which they found themselves living. In other circumstances, they would not have been inclined to follow up on the advertisement that they found in the paper and may not have noticed it at all.

In summary, financial hardships, often underscored by unemployment or the perceived inability to achieve homeownership, were powerful and common motivating factors for post-war Britons to migrate to Australia. Migrants did not have overblown expectations of what Australia would offer them regarding wealth. These migrants were simply looking for improvement, either through finding steady work or the chance to find affordable housing for purchase.

Experiences during the Second World War had a profound impact on many British migrants. Individuals’ experiences during the war often created their desire for migration after the war’s conclusion. Many homes had been destroyed and family members had been lost both at home and overseas. Factors such as these, combined with the ongoing rationing of many products such as food, clothing and petrol in the

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<sup>32</sup> Bell Interview, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Snelling Interview, 2014.

immediate post-war years, as well as fears of further conflict on the European continent as the Cold War took shape combined to make life difficult for British people, many of whom turned to migration as a way to escape these circumstances.

Thousands of men who served in Britain's armed forces throughout the conflict experienced life in Australia during their service. Some chose to stay in Australia at the war's conclusion, and for those who returned to Britain, their experiences abroad were often what drew them back to Australia. For some veterans, readjusting to British civilian life was difficult after years of living outside of a family environment, often in other parts of the world. Others craved the excitement of travel, of which they had experienced during their service years. For some, such as those who had been in Australia and other areas such as the Far East or North Africa during the war, returning to the British climate was depressing after spending years in hot and tropical locations.

Some ex-servicemen gained valuable skills through their wartime experiences, which helped them to gain employment in Australia after the war. For example, Bertrand Adams, who developed skills in radio and communications during his time in the Royal Air Force (RAF) was able to work for Radio Rentals when the war was over. Some years later, the work he had started in the RAF enabled him to take up a position with a South Australian company repairing and installing televisions when he answered their advertisement seeking British workers in 1959.<sup>34</sup>

Time spent in the armed forces also gave many migrants the experience of living in communal and barrack-style accommodation. These experiences were particularly beneficial for migrants who stayed in hostels when they arrived in Australia. Some ex-serviceman found the hostels to be very familiar, which made it easier for them to settle comfortably in their first Australian environment.<sup>35</sup> Jim Rowe and his wife found it easy to adjust to hostel life when they came to Pennington Hostel in Adelaide during October 1958, due to their wartime experiences. "Fortunately the wife had been in the army, so she didn't take it too badly either, you know, living in that community style and I had been at sea during the war so".<sup>36</sup> The satisfaction they

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<sup>34</sup> Marjorie Adams, interviewed by A. Thomson, 2000, British-Australian Post-war Migration Research Project, University of Sussex, Sussex.

<sup>35</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 68.

<sup>36</sup> Jim Rowe, interviewed by C. Manning, 2013, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

enjoyed, due to being in the hostel, demonstrates how similarities in their wartime circumstances and the circumstances they came to in Australia made it easier for them to settle successfully, as well as that their wartime experiences made it easier for them to enjoy the hostels, which were the first accommodation for many ex-service personnel in Australia.

World War Two was not the only conflict that affected migration to Australia after 1945. British people, together with much of the Western world, feared the likelihood of another global conflict. In particular, they were concerned about the possibility of a nuclear confrontation between the US and its allies (including Britain) and the Soviet Union.<sup>37</sup> This fear led people to think that leaving Britain was a wise course of action, in order to avoid becoming embroiled in a third major conflict on the European continent during the twentieth century. These feelings were further exacerbated by pessimism regarding the likelihood of Britain being victorious again. Incidents such as the closure and loss of control over the Suez Canal to the Egyptians in 1956 highlighted Britain's continuing decline as a global superpower, and increased the desire of some Britons to go to countries with a more positive outlook for the future.<sup>38</sup>

Migrants of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly young adults and children, were not as affected by the Second World War as those who had migrated between 1945 and 1960. By this period, much of the economic stress that had existed in the immediate post-war period was no longer present in Britain. The last of the wartime rationing was lifted on 4 July 1954 and the wealth and affluence of the British working and middle classes steadily rose throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, as the influence of war on peoples' daily lives receded.<sup>39</sup>

Age is discussed as it was often the determining factor of an individual's place within a family and contributed significantly to the type of expectations migrants had. Children who came to Australia were usually subject to the will of their parents and rarely experienced the same stresses and anxieties that adult migrants did. Teenagers and young adults who were single or married but without children also seem to have generally had easier experiences adjusting to Australian life than their older

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<sup>37</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 68; Appleyard, *Emigration*, 95.

<sup>39</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 70.

counterparts. Adult migrants with children often had the most difficulties, due to their need to find employment and housing quickly upon arrival in Australia at a hostel or otherwise in order to care adequately for their children. The older migrants were likely more set in their ways and thus less adaptable to the upheaval in circumstances that migration to Australia presented. Conversely, young adults often saw migration as an adventure, and were unburdened by children which allowed them to make the most of their opportunities in Australia.<sup>40</sup>

Adults with children often had very aspirational expectations for their new lives in Australia. Common amongst their expectations were: better employability and wages earned from employment, home ownership and improved health and wellbeing for themselves and their children. According to both scholarly works and the oral histories conducted for this project, these aspirations were amongst the most common expectations British migrants held for Australia.<sup>41</sup>

Adults without children also often came to Australia to improve their future prospects, usually through better employment for themselves. Young adults made up a large proportion of those migrants who arrived in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s and who became known as Ten Pound Tourists, as opposed to the more generic term Ten Pound Poms that was used to describe post-war British migrants. These later migrants often were seeking adventure and in many cases were not initially intending to stay in Australia permanently.

In most cases, migrants under the age of eighteen and even those under twenty-one were subject to the will of their parents. As John Cochrane, who migrated in 1963 with his parents said “In those days children weren’t given options the way they are now, whether they wanted to go as well you know you were told well we’re going and that’s the way things were then”.<sup>42</sup> As a result of not having significant input in the decision to migrate to Australia, and not having faced the financial and emotional stress that their parents often had, young migrants’ expectations were less aspirational than their parents, and they were more focused upon the adventure that migration presented

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<sup>40</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*.

<sup>41</sup> This goal can be seen in many oral histories conducted for the Hostel Stories Project, as well as other recorded and text based scholarly works on British migration to Australia. Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*.

<sup>42</sup> Cochrane Interview, 2014.

than the opportunities it offered in relation to things like jobs and housing. For many teenagers, their parents' decision to take them to Australia was a cause of great distress. Janet Coolen, who had a boyfriend in her hometown of Chester, said: "I didn't want to come, no, but back then you did do these things with your parents because twenty-one was the age when you could make up your own mind and so I came with them".<sup>43</sup> Catherine Barber shared a similar story about her brother: "My older brother was not happy to be going at all. He would have been probably about sixteen, seventeen, but he was going steadily with the girl who is actually his wife now and he didn't want to go but you didn't argue with my Mum, you know, if she decided, you would!"<sup>44</sup>

Perceptions of gender roles in post-war British society illuminate different reasons among males and females that often existed for migration and how these reasons shaped expectations. At the beginning of the post-war period, British society still considered the adult male to be the head of the family/household. This gave many husbands and fathers considerable power to influence the lives of their wives and children, who in some cases were powerless regarding the decision to migrate to Australia.<sup>45</sup> In some cases, female and child migrants who came to Australia as a result of the decision of a husband or father were not confident or happy about going to new lives in Australia. Consequently, their expectations for Australia were oftentimes negative. Many women struggled with separation from other family members, particularly parents, and expected to be lonely and without support networks in Australia.

Many migrant couples regularly cited better opportunities for their children and themselves as the primary reason for and main aspiration of their migration.<sup>46</sup> However, on an individual level, men—especially those in committed relationships or with children—, tended to be primarily concerned with improving their employability and

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<sup>43</sup> Coolen Interview, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Barber Interview, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> It was not always the case that men were the dominant members of relationships and within households in post-war Britain. Catherine Barber, who is referenced in the previous paragraph, claimed that her mother had always been the more dominant individual between her parents, and that her father largely went along with her mother's decision to migrate to Australia.

<sup>46</sup> Seeking better opportunities' for children and families lives was listed constantly by couples who answered the Hostel Stories registration questionnaire and is also mentioned frequently in oral histories conducted for the Hostel Stories project as well as other British to Australia post-war migration studies.

career prospects through migration. For single men, this characteristic of migrating primarily to improve their career prospects diminished over time, as preconceptions about their role as breadwinners became less set in stone and young men's income levels steadily rose throughout the late 1950s and into the 1960s. Conversely, young women had been more inclined to migrate in order to seek adventure and freedom from the time the war ended.<sup>47</sup> Due to their participation in the war effort, particularly through joining the workforce, British women were increasingly seeking lifestyles of greater personal autonomy, where they were seen as more than just wives and mothers.<sup>48</sup> Some women who worked, or had to fend for themselves while husbands, fathers and brothers were absent during the war, wanted to maintain the sense of independence that they had gained between 1939 and 1945, and in order to escape from a society where they were expected to return to their traditional pre-war roles in families and the community at large.<sup>49</sup> They came to Australia expecting a more egalitarian society, free from parents that did not approve of the independent lifestyles that they wished to lead.

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Physical environments, finances, war experiences, age, family structures and gender by no means account for all of the variables that influenced migrants' expectations of Australia, but they represent a series of factors identified in previous scholarly and popular work and verified by new oral histories for this project as influencing the expectations of many post-war British migrants. The reaction of various migrants quoted in this chapter to their personal circumstances highlights that their expectations of Australia were formed primarily in response to those circumstances, and were not built solely—or even most significantly—on the publicity to which they were exposed regarding Australia. It has been shown that individuals' environments and personal circumstances were by far the most significant influences on both their decisions to migrate as well as on the expectations that they formed of Australia before their arrival.

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<sup>47</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 66–67.

<sup>48</sup> James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives : Mass Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, GBR: OUP Oxford, 2010).

<sup>49</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 50–55, 81.



# Chapter Four: Reception Country Environments

In this chapter, the environments that migrants inhabited in South Australia are examined in order to show the effects that they had on whether migrants' expectations were met when settling in this State.

The environments that are discussed in this chapter are significant ones in South Australian British migration history. The first of these are the hostels which tens of thousands of British migrants stayed in when they arrived in South Australia. Migrants who arrived in South Australia without sponsorship from an individual or business were accommodated in one of approximately thirteen state or Commonwealth government funded hostels. Each hostel was different, despite being designed to fulfil the same basic purposes. Due to this variation, the hostels are an excellent example of how different environments in reception countries greatly influence migrant perceptions of that country and their experiences settling there.

A second point of focus is the 'satellite' town of Elizabeth, which represents another shared experience for tens of thousands of post-war British migrants as it was populated primarily by British migrants from the start of 1955 through to the 1970s. This environment was chosen for this research because of the stark contrasts that existed in experiences for migrants who settled there as opposed to more developed areas. Elizabeth was a purpose built community and British migrants were its primary source of population growth during its founding years. In this town, migrants experienced a significantly different form of Australian society when compared to those settling in major cities, as has been shown in existing scholarly literature.

The experiences of migrants who settled into Adelaide's urban areas following stays in hostels, with particular focus on Glenelg—another area where many British migrants settled—also will be discussed and contrasted with the experiences of British migrants in Elizabeth. This group's experiences are an example of one of the most common types of British migrant experience in South Australia, in that they moved from a hostel into the capital city and main population centre of the State. Their experiences, when compared to those who settled in different environments such as new

housing developments like Elizabeth, again show how the particular environment within South Australia migrants settled were determining factors of their perceptions of their new homeland. Thus this chapter documents the degree to which environments in reception countries match the expectations of migrants' journeys and their perceptions of the new environments which they came to inhabit.

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In the post-war era, assisted passage migrants from Britain usually stayed in government operated communal accommodation known as hostels. Hostels began operating almost immediately following the cessation of wartime hostilities in 1945 and the resumption of assisted passage migration from Britain to Australia in 1947.<sup>1</sup> Most of the thirteen South Australian hostels housed migrants from Britain at various stages of their existence between 1945 and the end of assisted passages in 1982.<sup>2</sup> British migrants stayed in large numbers in the Finsbury (later renamed Pennington), Rosewater, and Elder Park hostels, as well as the hostel at Gepps Cross, which was purpose-built to house British migrants separately from migrants of other nationalities.<sup>3</sup> Each of these hostels represents a different environment when compared to the others, but there are a number of common features, purposes and practices running through all of them. These similarities and points of difference make them very relevant for showing how the differences in some conditions, even in places which have similar structures and purposes, can produce significant variation in the experiences of the migrants inhabiting them.

Hostel administration was split between those hostels that fell under the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, such as Glenelg, Pennington and Smithfield, and others that were directly controlled by the State Government, including Elder Park, Semaphore and Woodville.<sup>4</sup> A small number of hostels also received funding from private businesses such as Broken Hill Proprietary in Whyalla and were

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia, Volume 5, 1942–1988* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia, 1990), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Jupp, *Immigration*, 95.

<sup>3</sup> "New Migrant Hostel at Gepps Cross", *The Advertiser*, 17/10/1950, 6.

<sup>4</sup> "Facts About Commonwealth Hostels Limited" (Melbourne: Commonwealth Hostels Limited, 1967), 2; James Varacalli, *The Life Cycle of Migrant Hostels Established in South Australia Post WWII (1948–1955), With An Emphasize On Those Run By The Commonwealth* (Internship diss., University of Adelaide, 2009) 17–19.

run jointly between Commonwealth and state governments, private companies and smaller organisations such as the Young Men's Christian Association.<sup>5</sup>

The most obvious similarity that existed throughout the South Australian hostels was their purpose. All of them were designed to be places of temporary accommodation, which migrants could inhabit whilst they either saved money to move into private accommodation, or while their own homes were being constructed. The hostels were also places designed to help migrants adapt to the Australian way of life and assist them with their settlement through providing help with tasks such as finding employment and housing and buying household goods. Another similarity of migrant hostels was the nature of the accommodation; it was spartan living, and designed to inspire people to move on with their new lives by getting out of the hostels rather quickly, rather than settling down there.<sup>6</sup> Although lengths of stay differed considerably, they tended to be longer for DPs and relatively short for British migrants.

The Elder Park Hostel was established in 1947 and remained in use as a hostel until 1969.<sup>7</sup> It was intended for the exclusive use of British migrants, however it was sometimes used by migrant employees of the South Australian Railways who could be on from any number of nationalities, including British. It is also thought that non-British migrants were sometimes accommodated at Elder Park when 'special circumstances' existed. Whilst the hostel had long-term residents, it was primarily used for short-term accommodation for those migrants who required housing for as little as one night, before moving to other accommodation. The hostel also was commonly used as a stopover centre for migrants being moved onto other hostels, which required substantial travelling time to reach, such as Whyalla or one of the many work camps that existed in rural South Australia.<sup>8</sup>

For many, due to their short-term residence, Elder Park had little influence upon their initial impressions of South Australia. These people tend to comment on the services that they received in regards to purchasing or renting housing, finding

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<sup>5</sup> NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence files, multiple number series (policy matters), 1/1/1922–31-12-1968, Control symbol 221/1/129, Migrant workers' hostel, Whyalla, South Australia.

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth Hostels, *Facts*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Hostel Stories, Elder Park", Migration Museum of South Australia, accessed 22/05/2014, <http://migration.historysa.com.au/content/elder-park>.

<sup>8</sup> "Hostel Stories, Elder Park".

employment or buying goods such as furnishings for the home, rather than the conditions of the hostel itself. Migrants who stayed for longer periods of time at Elder Park tended to have a much wider range of experiences. For example Gwilym John, who spent six weeks at the hostel, recalled that:

We were very fortunate because there was the old Cheer Up Hut was just outside the railway station and they used to have events in there. Also there was a group of ladies called the Victoria League in Adelaide used to come to Elder Park Hostel and take us out and around. The interesting thing, I think the second week we were there, we were going to see a slide show. We were all quite looking forward to this—we would see something of Australia—you'll never guess—they showed us all London. Some were homesick, some were crying and they didn't show us anything at all about Australia.<sup>9</sup>

Amongst the most frequently recalled characteristics of the Elder Park Hostel are the idyllic setting of the hostel, the ease of access to public facilities in the hostel's immediate surrounds in the nearby city centre and the employment opportunities associated with being so close to the Central Business District (CBD). The greatest advantage of being in the hostel at Elder Park was undoubtedly its location. No other hostel could match the services that were available within walking distance of Elder Park, such as the Public Baths, the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Adelaide Railway Station, banks and many other businesses that offered goods and services that new migrants required. It also was the hostel with the easiest access to entertainment, such as movie theatres, shopping, sporting venues and public events, once again due to its proximity to the city centre. Arguably the only hostel that could boast equally good lifestyle characteristics was Glenelg, due to its proximity to its namesake popular beach, but Elder Park Hostel was within walking distance of the tramway that could take migrants directly to the Glenelg beach district.

Although its proximity to the city made Elder Park the hostel that offered the best local services, the physical space that the hostel occupied also was advantageous for migrants, and especially children. Migrants recall the picturesque setting that enabled them to walk along the banks of the River Torrens and through the nearby parklands. Young migrants often recall having Elder Park (for which the hostel was named) as their backyard in which to play. Furthermore, they had the River Torrens

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<sup>9</sup> Linda Allery, *Migrant Heritage Places in Australia: City of Playford, Elizabeth District* (Elizabeth: Australian Heritage Commission, 1997), 36.

available for swimming in during the warmer periods of the year, though for migrants that arrived in the colder months of the year, the South Australian winter was mild enough that they were happy to dress in summer clothing and swim in the winter time. As Sean Reilly, a former resident of the Elder Park Hostel who arrived during the winter of 1966, described:

[M]uch to the disgust of people walking along King William Road...there's myself and my brothers out there in t-shirts and shorts and they're all walking around rugged up with overcoats and scarves...then we worked out after eight months here [Adelaide] what the difference between summer and winter is.<sup>10</sup>

Migrants from Elder Park fondly recall jumping off the Torrens Weir (located just a few hundred metres from the hostel) into the river.<sup>11</sup> Using the Torrens River as a swimming pool also enabled migrant children to socialise with children from outside the hostel who had come to the area to use the Public Baths. This area contrasted very favourably with the experiences of migrant children in other hostels, who were often restricted in their recreation pursuits by the barren nature of the surrounds of many of the other hostels. This restriction due to barren landscapes also affected adult migrants at other hostels who were not able to enjoy their surrounds, many of which were in non-urban areas, which led to feelings of isolation.

Migrants were generally satisfied with the accommodation provided for them at Elder Park. Common reactions to the hostel's conditions were that it was 'adequate, basic, minimalistic or Spartan'.<sup>12</sup> The accommodation was inside Nissen huts that were divided into dormitories of varying sizes for single people as well as small and large families. The dormitories contained a small number of functional furnishings. Single person dormitories contained a bed, table, light and small wardrobe, whilst larger family-sized dormitories contained several beds. The dormitories did not have their own bathroom facilities, and migrants were required to go to a different area of the hostel to access toilets, showers and laundry facilities. Making up for the basic nature of the dormitories were the recreation room and dining hall. Migrants were neither allowed

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<sup>10</sup> Anna Pope, *City of Elizabeth-Heritage Survey* (Elizabeth: South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> This story was told by a former child migrant of the Elder Park Hostel. The story was shared in a group discussion at a reunion event for Elder Park hostel residents held at the Migration Museum on the

<sup>12</sup> Coolen Interview, 2012; Pope, *Elizabeth*.

nor required to do any of their own cooking. British migrants received food that was described as basic, but was plentiful and edible by their cultural standards. The recreation room was a large hall where the migrants would gather, particularly at night time, to socialise with the other residents. The room had a television from around 1966, which was not a common feature of all hostels.<sup>13</sup>

Many residents of Elder Park were aware that they were fortunate to find themselves there, rather than in one of the other South Australian hostels. Migrants heard stories in Britain about the poor quality of hostel conditions from others who had gone before them, and experienced a sense of relief and even pleasure upon arrival at Elder Park, where hostel conditions were notably better than many rumours that they had heard regarding hostels. Robert Gillespie and his family recalled that in Britain a stigma had become attached to those who stayed in hostels. His family strongly refuted the idea that this stigma applied to them, as they had gone to Elder Park, a hostel for people who would be purchasing houses, which was therefore built and run to higher standards than hostels accommodating those who could not afford to purchase homes upon arrival, according to them.<sup>14</sup> As can be seen below, the Gillespie family appear to have been very happy with Elder Park:

[W]e were impressed...it wasn't five star but it was good, it was clean, beautiful dining room which was plain, it was clean. And we didn't have to cook, it was given to us, served. And they had a beautiful lounge full of chairs, settees, big TV, and a nice verandah outside, where you could sit in the sun and the sun was beautiful, never seen anything like this...the kids could go into the park, they'd never seen a black swan...They said 'Dad. Look black swans.' Like my little lad saw the orange tree, he said 'Oranges on a tree dad.' And the people looked at him as if, what are you on about. But we were so happy...the wife was so happy, there were shops, big shops and the market...We could get on a bus and go out to the suburbs. It was fine for me because I got a job the first day, you know.<sup>15</sup>

Although the account above is full of praise, memories of the Elder Park Hostel are far from being universally positive. As well as praise, there were also complaints from the migrants who stayed there which mirror the complaints of British migrants staying in other hostels. Janet Coolen, who stayed at Elder Park Hostel as an eighteen year old in

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<sup>13</sup> Pope, *Elizabeth*.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Gillespie, interviewed by S. Mann, 2011, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>15</sup> Gillespie Interview, 2011.

1964, recalled that the hostel was a very loud place which is a common complaint made against many of the hostels. She specifically remembered the walls that divided the sleeping dormitories, which were very thin and therefore could not successfully block out the sounds coming from the surrounding dormitories.<sup>16</sup>

Though exceptions exist, the expectations that migrants had of hostels were not only met at Elder Park, but in some cases were exceeded. Residents who had knowledge of other hostels believed the conditions at Elder Park were better than what they would have encountered elsewhere. The assistance that was available to them regarding finding future accommodation was plentiful, as were employment opportunities, recreational pursuits and other services of which migrants took advantage during their time at the hostel. Being immersed in an environment such as this upon arrival left most migrants with positive initial perceptions of South Australia because it met the expectations they had for their life in Australia.

The Rosewater Hostel, located in Port Adelaide and open from 1950 to 1953, is not as well-known as some of the other South Australian hostels, such as Elder Park and Finsbury/Pennington, but it is the most infamous amongst those who do know of it.<sup>17</sup> The combination of poor accommodation and a lack of nearby services resulted in Rosewater being perceived as the worst hostel in South Australia. It was never intended to be used to house British migrants and only did so due to shortages in availability of other 'more suitable' accommodation for British migrants during the early post-war years. Conversely, it was considered suitable for European migrants, whom it was intended the hostel would accommodate.<sup>18</sup> The experiences of migrants who stayed at Rosewater reflect extreme dissatisfaction with the hostel. Rosewater also has been negatively compared to notoriously bad interstate hostels such as Bathurst in New South Wales, which is considered to have been one of the worst places for migrants to live within the narrative of hostels nationally.<sup>19</sup> Some migrants' experiences at Rosewater led to them returning to Britain.<sup>20</sup> However, the conditions also led to feelings of relief and happiness when migrants left Rosewater Hostel for another hostel

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<sup>16</sup> Coolen Interview, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> "Rosewater", Migration Museum of South Australia, accessed 19/06/2014, <http://migration.historysa.com.au/content/rosewater>.

<sup>18</sup> Varacalli, *The Life Cycle of Migrant Hostels*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 181.

<sup>20</sup> "UK Migrants 'Complaints' Justified", *The Advertiser*, 24/1/1951, 3.

or moved into the community.<sup>21</sup> Rosewater played a role in shaping its residents' perceptions of South Australia during their stays there and in the future. Despite it being a negative experience, it often led to improved perceptions and experiences when migrants went to their next environment.

Migrants who were taken to the Rosewater Hostel found themselves living in former woolsheds that had undergone basic and hasty renovations in order to make them habitable for British migrants in the 1950s.<sup>22</sup> However, accounts of the accommodation make it clear that it was viewed as far less appropriate or comfortable than the Nissen huts migrants were expecting.<sup>23</sup>

Dr Lester Cannon was a young migrant who travelled with his parents and stayed in the Rosewater Hostel for approximately three months in January 1951. Dr Cannon's initial impression of Rosewater is indicative of how migrants' expectations for the hostels were not met at Rosewater. He said that: "...We were anticipating some fairly pleasant surroundings because we had been in a couple of places before but we were all shocked when the buses pulled up at Rosewater as it was called, expecting something nice and in fact it was converted wool sheds".<sup>24</sup>

Rosewater is consistently cast in a negative light in migrant memories. Some of the most common memories include the extreme heat, poor public transport, lack of childcare, poorly partitioned dormitories and ceilings made of mesh, which allowed migrants to witness rats and other vermin scurrying above them throughout the night.<sup>25</sup>

British migrants made numerous complaints about conditions at the hostel. These complaints were publicised by *The Advertiser*, South Australia's most widely circulated newspaper.<sup>26</sup> Rosewater residents were prominent in what became known as the 'rent strikes' in 1951, in which British migrants from many hostels protested against

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<sup>21</sup> Lindley Interview, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> E. Kearns, "Rosewater Hostel", *The Advertiser*, 10/11/1952, 4; "Improvements to Migrant Hostel", *ibid.*, 14/2/1951, 45; NAA, DOI, Central Office, A445, Correspondence files, multiple number series (policy matters), 1/1/1951–31/12/1955, Control symbol 221/1/96, Migrant Workers' Hostel, Rosewater, South Australia.

<sup>23</sup> "U.K. Migrants to Hear the Facts", *The Advertiser*, 27/1/1951, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Cannon Interview, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Donnelly, *Migrant Journeys*, 224.

<sup>26</sup> Zephyr Hicks, *Cataloguing Archival Material at State Records: Hostel Stories from the 1940s to 1980s* (Internship diss., The University of Adelaide, 2012) 18.



high rents and the poor quality of food, amongst other grievances.<sup>27</sup> These complaints did lead to some improvements being made to the hostel's conditions and complaints began to decrease; however, the Commonwealth Government feared that the image of the Rosewater Hostel was damaging Australia's attempts to attract more British migrants. Consequently, the hostel was closed in 1953 despite the improvements that had been made.<sup>28</sup> The majority of the migrants staying at Rosewater at the time of closure were moved to either Finsbury Hostel or the newly opened, British only, Gepps Cross Hostel.

The complaints make it clear that British migrant perceptions of their experiences at Rosewater Hostel were influenced by Australian publicity as well as their expectations of how they would be treated in Australia. Virtually all British migrants had come from environments that were far superior to the conditions with which they were confronted at Rosewater. After being promised accommodation in Nissen huts and instead receiving woolsheds—in which the walls did not meet the ceiling and sightings of rats, snakes and other vermin regularly occurred—many residents of Rosewater often moved into the community disillusioned regarding the image of life in Australia in which they had believed before they arrived.<sup>29</sup>

Finsbury Hostel, later known by the name Pennington due to a change in postal boundaries in 1966, was by far the largest South Australian hostel in terms of both physical boundaries and the number of migrants that it could and did accommodate. Opened in 1949, it housed many thousands of British migrants in the late 1940s, the 1950s and 1960s. For various periods, including most of the 1960s, the hostel was used only by British migrants. In its later years it accommodated mainly refugees from the Vietnam War and other conflicts from the South-East Asian region.<sup>30</sup> Finsbury generated many complaints regarding its conditions, though they were not as severe as those levelled by migrants against the Rosewater Hostel. Although it is clear that British migrants at Finsbury perceived the conditions to be of poor quality, to the point that

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<sup>27</sup> Nadia Postiglione, “‘It was just horrible’: The food experience of immigrants in 1950s Australia”, *History Australia*, vol. 7, issue 1 (2010): 09.3.

<sup>28</sup> Kearns, “Rosewater Hostel”.

<sup>29</sup> “Rosewater”.

<sup>30</sup> “Hostel Stories: Pennington”, Migration Museum of South Australia, accessed 16/7/2014, <http://migration.historysa.com.au/content/finsbury-pennington.>; Varacalli, *The Life Cycle of Migrant Hostels*, 19.

they refused to pay their rents and held protests regarding the conditions, the hostel was not shutdown as Rosewater was. Conditions at Rosewater were perceived as being worse than at Finsbury and many migrants' wished to be transferred to Finsbury whilst they waited for positions at the new Gepps Cross Hostel to become available.<sup>31</sup> Finsbury also had more facilities than Rosewater, such as a cinema and dancehall for entertainment, and had better access to public transport, which was critical for migrants who wanted and needed to move around the city.

Impressions of Finsbury are much more varied than those of hostels such as Elder Park and Rosewater. A significant portion of this variance is due to the sheer number of British migrants who passed through Finsbury and the period in which it housed British migrants, which was far longer than most other South Australian hostels. Many migrants found Finsbury to be satisfactory and enjoyed their time there, whilst others were extremely disappointed. The following quotes from British migrants, who stayed in Finsbury, reflect the contrasting viewpoints regarding lived experiences at Finsbury.

Fabulous, beautiful. It was clean, friendly, food was good, there was really nothing you needed and there was good companionship... nothing but good, I don't think, could be said about Finsbury Hostel. It was not the, as I said in one of my letters, it was not the Ritz. It was never intended to be, but it was certainly a very good place to stay when you were desperately in need of somewhere, which we were.<sup>32</sup>

Terry Howard (1951)

Fortunately—I mean, the eldest girl was just turned eleven, and the youngest one was just two and six, and the boy was eight, so they settled, it was no trouble to them. They had to lose their accent of course, with the Australian kids (laughs) and fortunately the wife had been in the Army, so she didn't take it too badly either, you know, living in that community style and I had been at sea during the war.<sup>33</sup>

Jim Rowe (1958)

I don't know if it was actually some kind of form, we had brochures of the place and it looked like a nice hotel. But it wasn't really a hotel. No.<sup>34</sup>

Joyce Shorrock (1954)

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<sup>31</sup> "U.K. Migrants to Hear the Facts", 3.

<sup>32</sup> Howard Interview, 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Rowe Interview, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Joyce Shorrock, interviewed by K. Agutter and C. Manning, 2013, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

Oh well, we didn't expect much. You just got one of everything. One wardrobe each, one chair, one knife, fork and spoon. Bunk beds we had and we had like a settee, a bed settee thing and then we had bits of our own furniture, bits of carpets which we had to put down. We had to put up with it because we knew, we didn't really expect anything. No air conditioning and everybody was in the same boat so that was it. That was how we lived.<sup>35</sup>

Muriel Evans (1961)

Each of these opinions regarding Finsbury reflects the migrants' experiences in relation to their expectations. The first is a highly positive appraisal of the environment at Finsbury. In this case, the migrant and his family had been facing homelessness after leaving the eastern states and journeying to Adelaide in search of a home. They spent their initial weeks in South Australia in the Finsbury Hostel which allowed them the opportunity to explore the city before settling in the suburb of Tranmere. Though it is apparent that they did not think the accommodation at Finsbury was particularly good, the experience of having difficulty finding a place to settle down in other areas of Australia clearly made them appreciative of the security that the hostel offered.<sup>36</sup>

The second quote is particularly interesting, as the migrant, Jim Rowe, specifically refers to his family's background and experiences prior to migration, and shows how they impacted on their experiences and perception of the hostel environment. It is clear that in this case, their perceptions of Finsbury were shaped by the expectations that they had based on their experiences of life in the British armed forces prior to their migration. Having already had experience of long term communal living arrangements and minimalistic accommodation, they did not find conditions at Finsbury to be nearly as problematic as many of their compatriots did.

The third quote, from Joyce Shorrocks, offers another direct comparison between expectations and lived experiences. She comments on the differences between her

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<sup>35</sup> Muriel Evans, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>36</sup> In this case, the migrant and his family had added reason to be grateful for the accommodation at Pennington. The father and son had actually moved into one of the vacant dormitories at Pennington without the knowledge of the hostel managers, and took full advantage of the services offered by the hostel. Their illegal tenancy was only discovered when the wife and daughter flew to Adelaide from Queensland and arrived at Pennington where the wife's inquiry about the whereabouts of her family members led to the discovery of their illegal tenancy. Nonetheless, they were accommodated immediately. See: Howard Interview, 2011.

expectations, based on the publicity she saw in England, and the disappointing reality that Finsbury provided when she lived there. Joyce alluded to the fact that her journey from Outer Harbour to Finsbury and her arrival at the hostel gave her a very disappointing first impression of South Australia, because it did not match up to the expectations that she had of the State, based on the information that her husband had shown her in England.

The fourth quote again shows how reactions to the hostel environment were influenced by previous experiences. Muriel Evans, who had experienced hostel life for eighteen months at the Cabramatta Hostel in New South Wales, had very low expectations of what Finsbury would offer because of her time in Cabramatta. As was the case with Jim Rowe, Muriel made it clear that conditions at Finsbury were not impressive, but that she did not feel let down or upset because her expectations for Finsbury were that it would be very basic, as it was.

The following passage from Bill Haigh differs from those above due to the strongly negative image that it provides of Finsbury. It is illustrative of many of the problems which migrants had during their time at Finsbury and how that Bill and his family's experiences at Finsbury were heavily influenced by the expectations they had built prior to migrating to South Australia:

I think the biggest shock was we were interviewed in England by an Australian interviewer, we didn't know anything about Australia and we had small kids and we said, well what sort of clothes do you wear. The kids said 'what about our budgie' - 'oh they fly around the streets, they're wild in the streets, you can throw your winter clothes away because our'...I think this bloke came from Cairns because he said 'our winters are like your summers'. So we threw our winter clothes away, we landed at Melbourne at the end of July, freezing cold and they said 'well this is Australia'. And we got to the hostel; we travelled overnight on the Overland, and arrived at Finsbury Hostel. And I was in the building trade, I came over here as a brick layer and my wage was twenty pounds a week at that time and the hostel took sixteen quid off me, left me with four. And the food was so disgusting that you had to buy your food. The first thing we bought was a fry pan, we used to take our food into the room and re-cook it you know.<sup>37</sup>

Opinions similar to Bill Haigh's account can be found in the complaints made by migrants in letters to the editor or reported by journalists in *The Advertiser* for the South

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<sup>37</sup> Allery, *Heritage Places*, 32, 33.

Australian public to read. Articles entitled “*Migrant Hostel Tariffs*”, “*Finsbury Hostel Definitely Sub-Standard*”, and “*British Migrants Air Complaints-Hostel Conditions at Finsbury Criticised*”,—amongst many others appearing on a regular basis during the 1940s and 1950s—make it clear that many migrants who stayed at Finsbury were deeply unhappy about conditions at the hostel.<sup>38</sup> Their complaints show that they had much greater expectations about hostel accommodation in comparison to what they found during their stays at Finsbury.

The Gepps Cross Hostel was purpose-built to exclusively accommodate British migrants. However, British migrants have recalled that migrants of other nationalities stayed there occasionally. It was opened in 1951 by the Commonwealth Government, which intended the hostel to be seen as a significant upgrade in facilities, when compared to other hostels such as Finsbury and Rosewater.<sup>39</sup> The first British residents at Gepps Cross were four hundred migrants who had been staying at Rosewater and Finsbury. They made applications to be moved to Gepps Cross when it was opened and were selected on the basis of how long they had already been in Australia.<sup>40</sup> Others were temporarily moved to Gepps Cross from Finsbury and Rosewater while those hostels underwent renovations to improve facilities to a standard thought to be acceptable for British migrants. Many residents also arrived at Gepps Cross when the hostel at Rosewater was finally closed due to the poor conditions. Hence many of Gepps Cross’ earliest residents had experienced life in one of South Australia’s other hostels before they arrived there.

Migrants who moved from one South Australian hostel to another, as well as those that stayed in interstate hostels before coming to Adelaide, offer an excellent demonstration of how perceptions are influenced by expectations. For instance, Bob Rowe said that, “Gepps Cross was like a palace compared to all we had been through. The communal canteen was O.K.—they served up some very nice meals”. After the depressing woolsheds of Rosewater with wire netting ceilings and the old army camp

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<sup>38</sup>“British Migrants Air Complaints-Hostel Conditions at Finsbury Criticised”, *The Advertiser*, 19/3/1951, 3; Frank Holt, “Migrant's Hostel Tariffs”, *ibid.*, 18/7/1951, 4; “Finsbury Hostel, Definatly Sub-Standard”, *ibid.*, 6/6/1951, 3.

<sup>39</sup> “Hostel Stories: Gepps Cross”, Migration Museum of South Australia, accessed 18/7/2014, <http://migration.historysa.com.au/content/gepps-cross>.

<sup>40</sup> “New Migrant Hostel Opens Tomorrow”, *The Advertiser*, 7/7/1951, 1.

conditions of Bathurst, Gepps Cross was “Probably the best hostel we had stayed in”.<sup>41</sup> These comments show that migrants had been disillusioned by the conditions which they had encountered at Rosewater, pre-renovation Finsbury and several other notoriously bad interstate hostels, due to having had expectations that those hostels would offer a higher quality of accommodation than they did in the early 1950s. Upon arrival at Gepps Cross, these same migrants expressed much greater satisfaction with the conditions there.<sup>42</sup>

Improved satisfaction appears to have occurred regardless of whether those expectations were based on publicity, comparison to migrants’ former homes in Britain or some other factor. Comments such as “It [Gepps Cross] was like a motel room when compared with before [Bathurst Hostel]” are representative of those made by many of the British migrants who moved to Gepps Cross from other hostels, and shows that the shift from one hostel to another caused a change to occur in their expectations.<sup>43</sup> They judged conditions at Gepps Cross by the new (and lower) expectations they had formed at places like Finsbury and Rosewater, and in light of knowledge that Gepps Cross had been built to purpose specifically for British migrants. Subsequently, the perceptions of Gepps Cross amongst this group of British migrants are more broadly positive.

Reactions to Gepps Cross from migrants who came to stay there directly after their arrival in South Australia in the late 1950s and 1960s until the hostel closed in 1965 contrast significantly with those who had experiences of another hostel. These migrants based their perceptions of the hostel on the expectations that they had formed of Australia, prior to leaving Britain. The following statement is an example of a migrant for whom Gepps Cross was their first and only hostel:

We were pleased that at long last we were a family again, sharing a Nissen hut with another family. The food was reasonable and wholesome but who can please hundreds of people with many tastes and needs?<sup>44</sup>

John Mathwin

Despite the range of reactions to Gepps Cross Hostel, it is clear that residents were aware that they had better conditions than those to which many of their compatriot migrants had been exposed at other South Australian hostels. Migrants in Britain who came to Gepps Cross had in many cases heard stories from migrants who had stayed in

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<sup>41</sup> Turner, *Tin Huts*, 44.

<sup>42</sup> John Quinn, “New Deal in Hostels”, *The Advertiser*, 13/7/51, 10.

<sup>43</sup> Turner, *Tin Huts*, 45.

<sup>44</sup> Turner, *Tin Huts*, 44.

one or more of South Australia's hostels and had saved up the money to return home due to their dissatisfaction. In some cases, the negative reports given by returned migrants in Britain would have lowered the expectations of migrants who were yet to make the journey.

Despite being perceived as a model hostel, protests against conditions occurred at Gepps Cross just as they had at other hostels. The majority of the complaints levelled against Gepps Cross in the early 1950s by its residents were about the high rents. Migrants argued that the high rent charges made it almost impossible for them to save money, which consequently meant they could not move out of the hostel. In turn they could not get on with improving their lives or those of their families, the most commonly-stated goal for British migrants who came to Australia in the post-war period.

The contrasting opinions of Gepps Cross residents who had and had not previously stayed in other hostels, such as Rosewater and Finsbury, shows the effect that expectations have on experiences. Those migrants who had experienced poorer conditions at other hostels, both in South Australia and interstate, believed that Gepps Cross was a paradise in comparison. Conversely, migrants who came to Gepps Cross directly from Britain, and whose expectations were therefore still heavily influenced by their living conditions in Britain, often found Gepps Cross to be quite disappointing.

Many British migrants who stayed in South Australian hostels became the founding residents of specifically-designed 'satellite' towns. These towns were used to house migrants on a permanent basis in a manner that would contribute to the expansion of specific areas and industries, whilst not contributing further to the housing shortages that already existed in the highly populated cities of Australia, including Adelaide.<sup>45</sup> The experiences of the British migrants who established the new town of Elizabeth are explored in this part of the chapter. This examination provides additional evidence to support the argument that perceptions of different environments in migrant reception countries had considerable influence on migrant experiences. Through comparison with British migrants who settled in the much older and far more developed area of Glenelg,

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<sup>45</sup> State Records of South Australia, GRS/13417/00001, SAHT, Annual Reports-South Australian Housing Trust, South Australian Housing Trust Annual Report-year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 1957 – 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Report; Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 35.

it shows the effects that settling in different areas of South Australia had on migrants' perceptions of their experiences are analysed. Furthermore, this section highlights how Elizabeth often did not match the expectations that some migrants gained through interacting with Australia's publicity that tended to portray established areas like Glenelg. Many of the problems faced and the opportunities had by the migrants who settled in Elizabeth undoubtedly were the same or similar to those who settled in the established suburban areas of the relatively nearby city of Adelaide. However, there also were unique problems and opportunities that these migrants experienced by moving to a new township. In the latter part of this analysis, the challenges faced by migrants at Elizabeth will be compared with the experiences of migrants who settled in the Glenelg area which represented a stark contrast to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth is located thirty kilometres north of the Adelaide CBD.<sup>46</sup> A distance of seventeen kilometres separated the site of this town from Adelaide's outer northern suburb of Gepps Cross in the 1950s.<sup>47</sup> The town was officially inaugurated on the 16 November 1955, at which time the nearest inhabited location was the town of Salisbury, located several kilometres to the south. For the formative years of the Elizabeth project, it would be included in the jurisdiction of the City of Salisbury before becoming a separate municipality in 1964.<sup>48</sup>

In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, the City of Elizabeth held a very different image to what it does today.<sup>49</sup> Rather than being perceived as an area of high crime, unemployment, low education and general unpleasantness, it was known in its early years as 'the city of tomorrow'. It was a place of big homes, more job opportunities than people to fill them, wide open community spaces and the very latest in technological advancements. In short—Elizabeth was—the positive answer to post-war problems that the city of Adelaide (and other major Australian cities) could not

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<sup>46</sup> "Snapshot of the City of Playford", City of Playford, accessed 3/12/2013, <http://www.playford.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=1342>.

<sup>47</sup> "Google Maps", Google, accessed 25/03/2014, <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Elizabeth+SA,+Australia/Gepps+Cross>.

<sup>48</sup> SAHT, *Chronological Table*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> "South Australia's Most Dangerous Suburbs", The Advertiser, accessed 8/9/2014, <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/south-australias-most-dangerous-suburbs/story-fni6uo1m-1226799849382>; "Australia's Youth Caught in Deep Pockets of Disadvantage", Australian Broadcasting Corporation, accessed 8/9/2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3785434.htm>.



overcome such as housing shortages and cramped urban communities.<sup>50</sup> This was the positive image that was presented to migrants in Britain whom the South Australian Government wished to attract to the new town.

The housing of migrants was not the principal aim behind the planning of Elizabeth. The key impetus that led to the establishment of the town was to alleviate the density issues of the already rising population in Adelaide, whilst concurrently aiding the removal of the post-war housing shortage. Lack of housing had become a serious social issue throughout Australian capital cities in the pre-World War Two years and was exacerbated by the return of Australian servicemen and women after the war as well as the desire to ensure they received better treatment than returned personnel from the First World War had.<sup>51</sup> The original concept was that Elizabeth would be a well-planned residential community whose workers would commute to jobs in Adelaide or large industrial sites such as the Salisbury Weapons Range.<sup>52</sup> Instead, under Playford's premiership, the SAHT was expanded into an organisation capable of managing large-scale housing projects, and with the enthusiastic efforts of leading members of the SAHT such as A.M. Ramsay, the purpose of Elizabeth changed.<sup>53</sup> It went from being a site purely dedicated to housing workers for Adelaide, to being a fully functioning city in its own right. It provided its workers with local job opportunities—driven by rapid industrialisation—that resulted in a thriving manufacturing industry being created in the area.<sup>54</sup> Industrial development and the development of new towns went hand-in-hand with immigration in the post-war years in South Australia. These trends, together with the problem of Adelaide residents not wishing to move away from the city centre to a new town environment, guaranteed that Elizabeth would become a town inhabited primarily by migrants.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth became the first area of South Australia to receive its electricity supply through underground cables, as opposed to on overhead street wires, which was considered a mark of prestige for the fledgling city at the time.

<sup>51</sup> Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 21.

<sup>52</sup> Peel, “*Planning the Good City*”, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Playford was also responsible for the naming of the town. His choice of ‘Elizabeth’ was designed to honour the young Queen for which it is named but was also a deliberate ploy to make the area seem more familiar, and therefore more attractive, to the British migrants whom he wished to populate it.

<sup>54</sup> Walter Crocker, *Sir Thomas Playford-A Portrait* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1983), 48–49.

<sup>55</sup> Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 89.

The town itself was used as a drawcard to bring British migrants to South Australia. At Australia House, migration officials handed potential migrants books on behalf of the South Australian Government outlining the types of housing available in Elizabeth. In 1958, South Australia House was opened in London to attract Britons to the State specifically.<sup>56</sup> Some of the migrants who came to inhabit Elizabeth first heard of this new town to the north of Adelaide when visiting South Australia House. They could sign up for housing in the Elizabeth area during these visits in order to live in the town upon their arrival in South Australia. The SAHT was instrumental in informing potential migrants in Britain about the opportunity to live in Elizabeth. The SAHT advertised in British newspapers, placed brochures and pamphlets in travel agencies and released short films about Elizabeth for the consumption of the British public. In the mid-1960s, it even extended the dissemination of the local newspaper produced for people in Elizabeth to Britain, so that potential migrants could be informed about current events in the town.<sup>57</sup>

As discussed in the publicity chapter, there were several methods beyond the general publicity through which migrants intending to live in Elizabeth or South Australia could obtain additional information about the town or State. These included acquiring information from staff at both Australia and South Australia houses in London and other Australian immigration centres spread across Britain. Migrants were able to write to immigration officers to seek answers when they had specific enquiries that were not answered by the information already being provided to them. Immigration officers endeavoured to answer these queries accurately, and in many cases took the action of passing the enquiries along to the relevant government departments in Australia in order to provide migrants with the most accurate and appropriate information.<sup>58</sup> For some migrants, their first awareness of Elizabeth as an area of potential settlement came on-board the migrant ships that brought them to Australia, by

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<sup>56</sup> Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 87.

<sup>57</sup> Pope, *Elizabeth*, 21–22.

<sup>58</sup> State Records of South Australia, GRG7/24/00000/93, Correspondence Files, State Tourist Bureau and successors, File 55/1946. This is an example of a migrant's inquiry about a business enterprise that was passed along to the relevant government department. State Records of South Australia holds many examples of migrants' queries that have been passed on to relevant Australian Government departments who were in the best position to answer their inquiries.

which point most migrants would have been giving significant thought to their future accommodation upon arrival at their destination.

The South Australian Government in particular was aware that migrants who felt deceived by the information that they received about their new environment were more likely to become return migrants.<sup>59</sup> Return migration compounded the expense of the investment made by both Commonwealth and state governments, to attract migrants and aid their assimilation into Australian society.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, return migration had the effect of making any assisted passage payment a substantial loss on a significant investment, although the Commonwealth Government did recoup the costs of some return migrants' transportation to Australia by requiring them to repay their fares in full if they had not stayed in the country for at least two years.<sup>61</sup>

Migrants who were informed about the conditions awaiting them in Elizabeth through pursuing the information available to them beyond the basic publicity were far more satisfied with the conditions they found upon arrival in Elizabeth than those who did not, as will be shown. Many migrants did not have information about Elizabeth when they came to South Australia, and in some cases they did not even realise they were coming to that State.<sup>62</sup> For those latter migrants, their first trip to Elizabeth on a bus or train through kilometres of barren land would have provided their first impressions. The varying levels of awareness regarding conditions in Elizabeth had important impacts on the types of experiences that British migrants had when they settled in Elizabeth.

Life in the early years of the Elizabeth community was a challenge for everyone who took up residence in the area, but especially for the migrant population that was trying to adjust not just a new town environment, but a new country and way of life. Expectations varied widely amongst the migrants. Most would have had at least a partial conception of what moving to a newly constructed town would be like, this conception came through either the information they received before their arrival in Elizabeth or from being aware that the original inspiration for the construction of

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<sup>59</sup> SRSA, GRG7/000024/00000/000087

<sup>60</sup> SRSA, GRG7/000024/00000/000087

<sup>61</sup> Alistair Thomson, "I Live on My Memories: British Return Migrants and the Possession of the Past", *Oral History*, vol. 31, issue 2 (2003): 58.

<sup>62</sup> Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 91.

Elizabeth was to create an improved version of the many post-war British new towns. They would also have been aware of the goal of alleviating similar issues to those experienced in London due to the extensive housing shortage.<sup>63</sup>

As alluded to above, the publicity to which migrants were exposed before arriving at their destination in many cases helped to shape their perceptions of their new environment. The material they would have seen in Britain promoted the Australian nation as a whole, invariably by highlighting Australia's most recognisable and attractive features: the sun, the surf, the wildlife and a society in which prosperity was a goal apparently within everybody's reach. As a result of exposure to publicity with these intentions at its core, some migrants who settled in Elizabeth expected many of these aspects of the publicity to be features of their new lives, which was usually not the case. There was more specific information available relating to South Australia and specifically to Elizabeth and this usually presented an accurate portrayal of the conditions in the area at the time of its writing.<sup>64</sup> Interaction with this material left the migrants who engaged with it thoroughly with far more realistic expectations of the environment they were coming to than those who did not.

Although the information in Britain about South Australia was widespread and generally accurate, some migrants who settled in Elizabeth had not engaged with it. Therefore, their knowledge regarding conditions in the new town prior to their arrival—either in Elizabeth or at a migrant hostel—was very limited. Some of these people would have seen the publicity that was prevalent throughout Britain regarding Australia in general, but nothing truly informative regarding the actual environment in which they would eventually reside. People who had poor or limited knowledge of the specific environment to which they were coming often had more aspirational expectations of Elizabeth and were therefore more prone to disappointment upon settlement in the town. They would encounter problems that they would not have been expecting as a result of not seeking information beyond what was initially made available to them. Some of these problems related to the town's location, lack of transport, lack of entertainment, isolation and issues of class, as discussed below which came as a shock and had a negative influence upon their early years in Elizabeth.

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<sup>63</sup> "Peel, *Planning the Good City*", 8.

<sup>64</sup> "Early Tips on S.A. for Migrants", *The News*, 6/5/1947, 4.

The types of physical environments that were displayed and promoted in standard Australian publicity were based on established cities and rural areas. Consequently, they were not broadly reflective of the physical surroundings of Elizabeth. The picture of Australia publicised in Britain was of a warm climate in idyllic settings. Migrants were shown images and films of some of South Australia's iconic locations that were not representative of the areas in which they would actually reside. Elizabeth was built on and surrounded by land that was previously used for agriculture purposes, meaning that rather than being a town surrounded by idyllic bushland and scrub (one of the environments that was publicised in Britain), Elizabeth was instead surrounded by barren fields which created dust storms to which British migrants, who had come from predominantly urban backgrounds, were not accustomed. Another physical feature that was publicised extensively in Britain were Australia's beautiful beaches and by extension, an idyllic beachside culture. An example of this type of publicity was noted by several migrants involved in the Migrant Heritage Places project in 1997. They recalled a booklet sent to them from Australia House encouraging them to go to Elizabeth but, with the benefit of hindsight, they realised it was clearly based on other parts of South Australia. Gwilym John, who came to Elizabeth in 1959, said:

We went through this [the Elizabeth booklet] and I thought that would be a nice house when we got around to it. When we came here they didn't exist because they included Queen Elizabeth Hospital [located in western Adelaide] and it said 'close to the beaches' and showed Victor Harbour...I went looking for these houses and eventually went to the Housing Trust and they said 'well that's the space for them [Elizabeth]'.<sup>65</sup>

Elizabeth is not close to the beach as the booklet led these migrants to believe and beachside suburbs were not easily accessible to migrants who did not own a car.

Transport was a significant problem for many migrants in the early years of Elizabeth. With the exception of the railway that ran to the city, public transport was initially very scarce. There were infrequent bus services, and the area lacked the tram services to which inner-city residents had access.<sup>66</sup> Long journeys were common. Gwilym John recalled that:

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<sup>65</sup> Allery, *Heritage Places*, 41.

<sup>66</sup> Allery, *Heritage Places*, 23.

[M]y wife wanted to see somebody in Northfield Hospital. She had to leave home at half past nine to get there by two o'clock. [She took] The only bus that went all around town [Elizabeth] to reach the railway station, then it was to Adelaide and back for [a destination that was only] twenty minutes down the road.<sup>67</sup>

Personal ownership of vehicles was much rarer in those days. Most families eventually purchased a car, but this was primarily for the use of the household's male breadwinner, who would use it to travel to and from work each day.<sup>68</sup> Women with children often had no choice but to walk to their intended destinations. Some took this in their stride and enjoyed being in the outdoors.<sup>69</sup> For others, travel over significant distances seemed like too much trouble given they did not live close to the train line or bus services. Most British migrants would have been accustomed to the far more comprehensive transportation system that existed in Britain in the 1950s–60s, particularly those from urban centres in the south east of England, including London, from where the greatest numbers of British migrants arrived in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>70</sup>

Isolation and homesickness were feelings that affected British migrants who settled in all areas of Australia and those who settled in Elizabeth were no exception particularly because the town as a whole was deliberately isolated from the rest of society. In many cases it led to migrants eventually returning to Britain, or at least being unhappy during their initial period of settlement in Elizabeth.<sup>71</sup> Feelings of isolation arose amongst British migrants who had difficulty adjusting to separation from their families, friends and other support groups in Britain.<sup>72</sup> Feeling isolated was due in part to the physical separation of being in different countries, but also due to the difficulties that were experienced by migrants attempting to contact their loved ones in Britain. Janet Coolen, for instance, spoke of how she desperately wanted to return to Britain during the first year she was in Elizabeth to be with the boyfriend she had left behind. She recalled the frustration of waiting for mail to arrive from Britain, and only being able to speak to him over the telephone once, at Christmas, during her first year in

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<sup>67</sup> Allery, *Heritage Places*, 23.

<sup>68</sup> Peel, "Making a Place", 9, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Sean Reiley, interviewed by J. Madden, 2014, Hostel Stories Project, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

<sup>70</sup> Jupp, *Immigration*, 92; Pope, *Elizabeth*, 21.

<sup>71</sup> Alistair Thomson, "Voices we Never Hear: The Unsettling Story of Post-war 'Ten Pound Poms' who Returned to Britain", *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, vol. issue 24 (2002): 54.

<sup>72</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 134.

Elizabeth.<sup>73</sup> Other factors contributed to this problem because of the type of environment that Elizabeth was. The issues with transportation noted above also exacerbated feelings of isolation amongst British migrants in Elizabeth. However, it is likely that the most relevant factor contributing to feelings of isolation was the nature of the ‘satellite’ town itself. Elizabeth was an isolated location. Though it expanded rapidly, it did not have the population density to which many migrants from large British cities and rural townships were accustomed. The lack of population density was fine for those migrants who desired that situation or who were aware how scarcely populated Elizabeth would be when they arrived there. However, some migrants were disheartened when they moved into newly built streets where the homes around them were not inhabited and the opposite side of their street was filled with dusty paddocks and scrubland rather than a vibrant community.<sup>74</sup> Arriving and living in such a place was initially a negative experience for some migrants as the environment was extremely different from the environments upon which their expectations were based.<sup>75</sup>

A minority of migrants expected a re-creation of the British class system in Australia. For the most part, this re-creation does not appear to have occurred in Elizabeth, despite it being perceived as a British town.<sup>76</sup> Most migrants coming to Australia held the expectation that they were entering a far more egalitarian society, and it would seem that was the case in Elizabeth, despite the fact that the construction of Elizabeth was deliberately designed to separate different classes of people from each other and hide the perceived lower class away from the public eye by methods such as placing the rental housing that less affluent migrants were likely to inhabit away from main roads.<sup>77</sup> This strategic placement of housing supposedly improved the image that the town presented to outsiders who passed through, who would only see the homes of the more affluent members of the Elizabeth community. Property ownership was the main aspect of life in which differences of class were perceived amongst Elizabeth’s inhabitants. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was possible to discern whether a person rented or owned their home based upon the street in which they lived. Furthermore, as the suburbs along the eastern side of Elizabeth grew, the perception that those people who

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<sup>73</sup> Coolen Interview, 2012

<sup>74</sup> Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 111.

<sup>75</sup> Evans Interview, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 138.

<sup>77</sup> Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 95.

lived on the hillsides that overlooked Elizabeth had attained a higher level of wealth and social status became apparent.<sup>78</sup>

The environments from which migrants had come in Britain were crucial in forming both their expectations for Elizabeth as well as their perceptions of the town. Most migrant inhabitants of Elizabeth were lower middle or working class people from urban environments and were generally well satisfied with the homes they either purchased or rented, as they frequently point out the differences in size and facilities compared to the homes they inhabited in Britain.<sup>79</sup> Most were pleased by the lack of population density, given they were accustomed to highly crowded cities such as London and were therefore happy to come to the wide open spaces, large numbers of parks and other community areas that had been built into the design of Elizabeth, as well as to houses on larger blocks of land which allowed them to garden.<sup>80</sup>

Major services were lacking in Elizabeth, particularly in the 1950s. Entertainment facilities were not the priority and both adults and children had to find ways to entertain themselves that would have differed had they settled in a major city.<sup>81</sup> The ability to find ways to entertain themselves was much more achievable for children than it was for adults, especially those who enjoyed the outdoors and the wonderful opportunities for exploration and adventure that living in a ‘satellite’ town had to offer. Adults’ recreational pursuits were more limited, particularly for those with young children. When British migrants began arriving in the mid and late 1950s, Elizabeth was yet to acquire entertainment facilities such as the drive-in, cinema, theatre, waterpark and the many pubs that would become popular forms of adult entertainment there in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>82</sup> For Elizabeth’s earliest inhabitants, a trip to the city was usually the best way to access facilities such as those listed above. However, this was often not practical for parents that wished to remain close to their homes and their children whilst enjoying entertainment. For the most part, the opening of community buildings and points of interaction was limited to shopping centres, schools and

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<sup>78</sup> See Peel, *Good Times, Hard Times*, 39–55, for a detailed analysis of how the SAHT planned the Elizabeth suburbs so that its eastern suburbs with elevation would mostly accommodate middle-class residents while working class residents would primarily inhabit the homes of Elizabeth’s flat plains suburbs.

<sup>79</sup> Snelling Interview, 2014; Evans Interview, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Snelling Interview, 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Galbreath, *Garden City*, 53.

<sup>82</sup> SAHT, *Chronological Table*.



churches of various denominations in the 1950s. Despite these difficulties, migrants did not simply sit around and do nothing for fun. The lack of facilities in Elizabeth was a contributing factor in the creation and membership of many social and special interest clubs and societies within the Elizabeth area in the late 1950s through to the 1970s. They were designed to get people together who had similar hobbies, such as the Apex Club of Elizabeth, Central Districts Car Club, Elizabeth Amateur Radio Club and the Elizabeth Art Society to name but a few.<sup>83</sup>

One group that found the experience of migrating to a new town in Australia rather than living in an established city to be beneficial were the migrant children and teenagers. Young migrants who came to Australia with their parents often did not hold the same anxieties about the migration experience or their future and so they came to terms with their new environment much more readily than their parents did.<sup>84</sup> The migrants interviewed for this project that were children or young adults when they moved to Elizabeth for the most part remember their childhoods fondly. They recall their recreation time as being outdoors and highly adventurous, and do not express having struggled with many of the anxieties that their parents encountered. Sean Reilly recalled that he and his friends once attempted to trek from Elizabeth to One Tree Hill but had to turn back half way up the hill when they realised how great a trek they had embarked upon (approximately ten kilometres). He also recalled that his mother was happy for himself and her other older children to go on these types of adventurous wanderings while she remained at home to care for her younger children.<sup>85</sup> The openness and isolation of Elizabeth gave children a sense of freedom and adventure that was not easily replicable in other South Australian environments or in the British urban environment which they had left.

Not all of the problems that migrants who settled in Elizabeth faced were influenced by their interaction with publicity and information or their expectations based on their environments in Britain. British migrants from all walks of life encountered discrimination based upon their nationality in Elizabeth and in Australia at large. Not only did they face the stigma associated with being foreign born, as migrants of many nationalities have throughout Australia's past, they faced the added stigma of

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<sup>83</sup> SAHT, *Elizabeth*, 10–15; SAHT, *Chronological Table*.

<sup>84</sup> Zamoyka, *The Ten Pound Fare*, 95.

<sup>85</sup> Reiley, Interviewe, 2014.

being part of ‘the pommy town’ as Elizabeth came to be known. However, experiences of discrimination were far from universal. Many of the British who went to Elizabeth do not recall having ever been discriminated against or feeling as though they had been put down due to their nationality. British migrants learned that phrases based on their heritage directed at them by Australians like pommy bastard and whinging pom were often terms of endearment, and many have stated that the best way to further endear themselves to Australians was to say something clever but good natured in reply.<sup>86</sup> Elizabeth was also seen by some as an area where being British was not as likely to lead to discrimination or racism from the Australian born population, due to the very large numbers of British people in the town.<sup>87</sup> For those who did experience it, discriminatory or racist behaviour towards British people sometimes led to them becoming estranged from the rest of the Australian community.<sup>88</sup>

British migrants who were informed about the environment to which they were coming by having digested the information that was available to them—prior to their arrival in Elizabeth—, were generally satisfied or even pleased with the conditions they found upon arrival and during the first few years of their settlement. Muriel Evans expressed her happiness with the home she moved into with her family “I thought it was nice, three bedrooms, bathroom and toilet and everything and a big garden...it was nice—I liked it”.<sup>89</sup> People like Muriel Evans had realistic expectations of what living in the area would entail. Consequently, they were far more likely to be satisfied by what they found there than those without prior knowledge. These migrants made considered decision to move to Australia, rather than migrating upon a whim as some tended to do when offered a trip across the world for only ten pounds.<sup>90</sup>

As with almost all forms of post-war migration publicity and/or information, errors did occur occasionally, such as the inaccurate portrayal of Elizabeth in a booklet that affected Gwilym John. However, in most cases Elizabeth residents had the opportunity to receive accurate information about the town in Britain if the idea of a ‘satellite’ town interested them and they were also able to view the town itself upon

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<sup>86</sup> Cochrane Interview, 2014; Reiley Interview, 2014.

<sup>87</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 145–152.

<sup>88</sup> Collins, *Migrant Hands*, 208.

<sup>89</sup> Evans Interview, 2014.

<sup>90</sup> Hammerton and Thomson: *Ten Pound Poms*, 49; Richards, *Destination Australia*, 205.

arrival in Adelaide to decide whether they would choose to rent, purchase or build a home there. Migrants including Gwilym John who committed to living in Elizabeth before having seen the town often had expectations that were not met. Conversely, many migrants who only made the decision to settle in Elizabeth after having compared it with other locations around Adelaide were aware of what life in Elizabeth would entail, and consequently their expectations were far more aligned to the conditions that the town had to offer.<sup>91</sup>

Whilst Elizabeth received the highest numbers of British migrants in South Australia, other areas such as Glenelg also became home to significant numbers of them in the post-war period. In the following section, the differences in the environment that migrants encountered at Glenelg as opposed to Elizabeth are discussed in order to further argue that the type of environment to which British migrants came had an important impact on the outcomes of their settlement experiences.

The proclamation of the British colony of South Australia occurred at Glenelg on the 28 December 1836. It was the first area of the modern day city of Adelaide to be inhabited by European settlers.<sup>92</sup> By 1955, when the town of Elizabeth was being proclaimed to Adelaide's north, Glenelg had been established for one hundred and nineteen years. By this time it had many of the attractive features that post-war British migrants were expecting when they settled in South Australia. Glenelg was an area of South Australia that matched up to the more idyllic images of the State and of Australia that had been presented to British migrants through Australia's publicity campaign in the post-war period.

The physical environment of Glenelg was a great contrast to that of Elizabeth in the 1950s and 1960s. The most noticeable aspect of difference between the two is that Glenelg and its surrounding suburbs are a coastal area. Migrants arriving and living in Glenelg, either at the migrant hostel or in their own housing, had easy access to what was one of the most popular beachside destinations for residents of the City of Adelaide and surrounding areas.<sup>93</sup> The beach was only a few minutes walk from the hostel, and the sea also was within walking distance or a short car/public transport trip for Brits

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<sup>91</sup> Snelling Interview, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> W.H. Jeanes, *Historic Glenelg: Birthplace of South Australia 1855–1979* (Glenelg, South Australia: Glenelg City Council, 1979), 13.

<sup>93</sup> Lindley Interview, 2014.

who came to reside in Glenelg. The seaside culture of Australia had been heavily promoted by Australian publicity in Britain, and migrants who came to Glenelg were welcomed into such an environment as opposed to those in Elizabeth who were confronted with a barren landscape, which was far from the idyllic beach and bush settings some of them expected. Another aspect of the physical environment that was significantly different between the two cities was that the urban sprawl outwards from Adelaide reached Glenelg in the 1940s.<sup>94</sup> This was a cause for dismay amongst some Australian residents who felt that Glenelg had lost its allure as a seaside town. However, for migrants living in Glenelg after the Second World War, Glenelg was a much more familiar landscape than Elizabeth, which due to its newness was isolated and underdeveloped in some areas that were important to migrants building a new life in South Australia.

One of the main benefits of settling in an established city like Glenelg was the transportation system that had developed over many decades. The transport network between Adelaide and Glenelg had actually diminished from its peak in the 1920s when two train lines had operated between the city and the popular seaside destination. Both of these were shut by 1929, though one was subsequently converted into the electric tramline that runs between Adelaide and Glenelg to this day.<sup>95</sup> Not only did Glenelg have a tramline available for travel to Adelaide when British migrants were arriving in the post-war period, it also had regular bus services running between the two locations and other suburban destinations in and around Adelaide. British migrants, who often did not have cars when they first moved in to the Glenelg area, could use these extensive public transport networks to help them get around for the purposes of employment, entertainment and recreation. The other major transportation advantage of Glenelg in this period was Anzac Highway. The highway was built over the old Glenelg Road, which was established for traffic between Glenelg and Adelaide in the previous century, and was now a multilane highway that could easily accommodate thousands of motor vehicles each day.<sup>96</sup> In comparison, Elizabeth in the 1950s had Main North Road for vehicle traffic between itself and the city. Main North Road at that time was a single lane road in several places and did not have frequent services like petrol stations due to

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<sup>94</sup> Tom Brown, *Glenelg, An Urban Village 1836–1972* (Adelaide: T.J Strehlow, 1973), 76.

<sup>95</sup> Brown, *Urban Village*, 73.

<sup>96</sup> Brown, *Urban Village*, 81.

the sixteen kilometres of land that separated Elizabeth from Gepps Cross. Migrants in Glenelg who purchased vehicles were able to take advantage of the road infrastructure which allowed them to access the city easily.

The services that were available for entertainment, recreation and day-to-day life were also far more extensive in the suburbs surrounding Glenelg than they were at Elizabeth. The Jetty Road shopping precinct was one of the largest that existed in all of metropolitan Adelaide in the 1950s and Glenelg was the shopping hub for the new southern suburbs such as Marion that did not have their own commercial developments until much later.<sup>97</sup> Areas like the Jetty Road precinct and easier accessibility to Adelaide's CBD meant accessing community services, jobs and recreational facilities was much easier in a developed suburban area like Glenelg than the isolated township of Elizabeth.

The other feature of Glenelg that made it very attractive to many British migrants was that unlike Elizabeth, Glenelg's population was not mostly made up of British migrants. Many people that moved to Glenelg and other areas of suburban Adelaide expressed their firm desire not to go to places such as Elizabeth in the north and Christie's Beach in the south which also was a new community that targeted British migrants. These people claimed that they wished to immerse themselves amongst the Australian population for a variety of reasons including the desire to rapidly assimilate into Australian society and cultural habits, so that they would not attract the stigma in Australia of belonging to the 'pommy town' and because they had not come all the way from Britain to live with British people in what amounted to a British community (or even ghetto) in South Australia. Muriel Evans, for instance recalled a visit to the office of the SAHT where a home in Elizabeth was offered to her. Her response to this offer as she recalled it was: "No, I said no. We came all this way to be in a different culture. My kids had changed school three times in a year and I didn't come all this way to live with a bunch of Poms".<sup>98</sup>

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Most British migrants had aspirational hopes of what their lives would be like in Australia. For those who came to Elizabeth, the expectations they had of the new town

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<sup>97</sup> Brown, *Urban Village*, 79.

<sup>98</sup> Evans Interview, 2014.

were formed to a large extent by their level of interaction with the information available regarding Elizabeth prior to their arrival, as well as how the town compared with the environment from which they had come in Britain. This analysis of experiences in Elizabeth shows that those migrants who settled in Elizabeth in the 1950s and 1960s who engaged with the information that was available about the town, prior to their arrival were mostly satisfied with the reality of life in the 'satellite' town. It also has shown that in many cases, Elizabeth was a huge cultural shock for new British migrants who were not aware of the type of environment they were entering and who had higher aspirations of what their new lives would be like in its initial phases. It shows that the environment to which migrants come, and how prepared they are for it, is as significant as the environments they left in Britain in determining their perception during their early years in Australia.

Conversely, migrants who settled in the Glenelg area of Adelaide were usually more satisfied with the environment they had come to inhabit. Migrants who had researched the area were happy because Glenelg lived up to the expectations they had formed of it. Furthermore, migrants who were largely uninformed about the area also were generally pleased, as Glenelg was an affluent, developed beachside environment that was reflective of the image of Australia that many migrants held.

# Conclusion

This thesis has used the stories of British migrants who came to South Australia between 1945 and 1982 to supplement and expand the scholarship that exists regarding the expectations which migrants had of the State and Australia in general. It has shown how they perceived their experiences in relation to their expectations, in light of factors that helped form those expectations, such as Australia's prolific publicity and information in post-war Britain, the living conditions from which British migrants came, and the environments into which they settled during their early years in South Australia.

The introduction of this thesis reviewed the scholarly literature relating to post-war British migration to Australia. Analysis of that literature revealed two important issues. Firstly, British migrant stories have not been sufficiently visible in comparison to the stories of other migrant ethnicities in Australia, despite the British being the most numerous of Australia's post-war immigrants, and the existing narratives of the British migrant experience have been too narrow and homogenous. Furthermore, the experiences of migrants who settled in South Australia were particularly underrepresented within Australian migration literature, including the stories of South Australia's migrant hostel residents, whose stories were used extensively to inform the research in this thesis. In part, the decision to focus on the experiences of British migrants and hostel residents specifically was made in order to redress these limitations in Australia's post-war migration literature. Secondly, the existence of the perception that many British migrants had been deceived by the publicity by successive Australian governments which was designed to encourage their migration was apparent. This perception was evident in scholarly literature, collections of British migrants' stories, individual migrants' memoirs, and in audio and visual formats including television documentaries and mini-series. There is no doubt that some migrants did receive inaccurate information and this thesis does not dispute those claims. However, it was argued that these perceptions of incorrect information and/or outrageously overblown publicity as widespread or existing as a sort of norm of British migrant experience arose because the accounts of migrants who reported these perceptions have not previously been examined in relation to those of the far more numerous migrants who did not share these experiences. Furthermore, the role played by Australia's post-war governments in

creating and distributing publicity had not been analysed sufficiently. Consequently, some migrants' negative experiences upon arrival in Australia had not been critiqued in a way that allowed ascertainment of whether Australian governments consciously aimed to attract British migrants by distributing information that they knew to be inaccurate or misleading.

The second chapter analysed the accuracy and aim of the publicity and information that was distributed by successive Australian governments. The analysis of new oral histories as well as a large volume of government archival documents led to several important conclusions. Firstly, it was concluded that it was not the intention of Australian Commonwealth and state governments to disseminate misleading information or exaggerated publicity. Australian governments made every effort to ensure that information was up to date and relevant to changing conditions in both countries. Whenever it was brought to attention that they had published something that was inaccurate or their information had become outdated, the DOI took steps to remove the inaccurate material from circulation and replace it with updated material as quickly as possible. At both the Commonwealth and state levels, Australian governments were aware that misleading information would inevitably result in unacceptably high numbers of migrants returning to Britain and have negative impacts on subsequent potential migrants. They were determined that the post-World War Two publicity campaign would not be a repeat of the post-World War One campaign, which they recognised had been misleading and was ultimately regarded as a failed attempt at attracting and keeping British migrants in Australia. However, the chapter also argued that people who made decisions to migrate based only on interacting with the basic and deliberately attractive publicity such as films and posters and who did not seek further information about Australia often had misconstrued expectations of what Australia would be like. It shows that a great deal of additional, accurate and useful information was available to British migrants and that the DOI was always willing to provide the information migrants' asked for.

Chapter three examines the locations from which migrants came in Britain in order to demonstrate how those environments were largely responsible for shaping their expectations of Australia. In this sense, the chapter documents the traditional 'push' factors that influence migration throughout the world. By discussing factors that influenced migrants' expectations, the chapter supplements and expands on the



literature that already discusses post-war British migrants' expectations. It demonstrated that variations in migrants' environments in Britain were usually responsible for shaping their expectations, rather than the publicity that has previously been held to have such a prominent role in the popular narratives of what influenced post-war migrants' expectations.

Migrants aspired to improved physical surroundings but were often also seeking familiarity when establishing their new homes. Furthermore, those migrants who chose to research areas in which they would later settle in South Australia were more successful at finding environments in South Australia that shared some characteristics with the homes they had left behind in Britain, leading to greater satisfaction in the long run.

Financial wealth was one of the most important factors that contributed to the formation of expectations. The oral histories on which this thesis draws make it clear that these migrants were looking to improve their financial situations by migrating to Australia. However, they also establish the fact that migrants did not expect to strike it rich in Australia; they were merely looking for a relative improvement in their overall financial capacity. This desire for financial improvement often was linked to the idea of home ownership, which many migrants could not achieve in Britain, but hoped to be able to do in Australia. Despite financial pressures, British migrants were not universally poor and their relative wealth in comparison to one another influenced their expectations. Migrants who came from areas in Britain that could be considered lower socio-economic regions were less likely to have extravagant expectations. Having lived in poorer areas, they were better prepared for the sometimes restrictive or under-developed areas that they would come to inhabit in South Australia.

World War Two as well as other mid-to-late twentieth century conflicts also played roles in shaping the expectations of various British migrants. It often inspired a desire for further travel and adventure which had been a feature of daily life for those men and women who had been in Britain's armed forces. An added benefit of wartime experience for many was that they lived in shared communal environments between 1939 and 1945 which meant that they were well prepared for the living arrangements which they would encounter when they arrived at one of Australia's migrant hostels.

Migrants' ages at the time of migration and position within the structure of their family units also influenced the types of expectations that they formed of Australia. For reasons including having to do what their parents told them, not having considered migration due to their relatively young age and having to leave friends behind, young adult migrants and children typically did not have specific or exceptional expectations for life in Australia. Single adult migrants were seeking greater personal wealth or simply an adventure. It was frequently the case that migrants that were married and brought their children with them to Australia had more specific expectations. They had high hopes for improving their own conditions as well as those of their children, both at the time of migration and into the future.

By showing the impact that each of these factors had on forming migrants' expectations for Australia, this chapter further confirms that Australia's publicity campaign was not the primary factor that determined many migrants' expectations. Though most migrants interacted with government publicity at some point prior to their journey to Australia, it is clear that in most cases, it was other variables in their lives in Britain that shaped their expectations for life in South Australia.

Chapter four documented how different places which migrants inhabited in South Australia either did or did not match their expectations. The locations examined in this chapter include several of South Australia's migrant hostels, the 'satellite' town of Elizabeth and the Adelaide suburban area of Glenelg. By analysing migrants' experiences in these three distinct environments, this chapter showed that the places to which migrants came in South Australia were crucial in determining their perceptions of their migration experiences.

Experiences at each of South Australia's migrant hostels were different. British migrants generally considered the Elder Park Hostel to be a satisfactory environment. It was usually inhabited by migrants that had enough wealth to move out of the hostel after only a few weeks and into their own homes. Being located in Adelaide's CBD, it provided access to many services and amenities that could not be accessed from other hostels. In contrast, Rosewater Hostel did not meet the expectations of the migrants who stayed there, as documented in this chapter. In many cases, it left migrants unhappy with their experiences in South Australia. Despite many migrants having come from amongst the lower classes in British society, Rosewater was an environment that

was seen to be worse than the environments which they had left behind. Opinions about the Finsbury/Pennington Hostel were shown to be the most varied, and reflected the many changes that took place at that hostel over time. Whilst some migrants were pleased with Finsbury/Pennington, other migrants with more aspirational expectations of South Australia were not satisfied with the conditions there. The experiences of British migrants at Gepps Cross Hostel provided clear examples of how expectations are primarily shaped by the environments in which migrants lived previously. The first migrants to stay in Gepps Cross were those who were not satisfied at either Finsbury or Rosewater hostels. Arriving at Gepps Cross having already experienced other South Australian hostels which they considered to be totally unsatisfactory in part resulted in these migrants having very positive recollections of the Gepps Cross Hostel. In contrast, migrants who came to Gepps Cross directly from Britain still compared the hostel to the environments from which they originated and consequently were far more inclined to express unhappiness with the conditions at the hostel.

The ‘satellite’ town of Elizabeth was not an environment that resembled the general publicity portraying Australia in Britain. It is a clear example of an area where having advance knowledge of the environment was critical to migrants’ perceptions of the area. Migrants who came to live in Elizabeth who had not interacted with information that was specific to the town, or moved there without considering other areas of South Australia, were often shocked by what they found there. Migrants who knew what to expect in Elizabeth such as a physically isolated community, lack of transportation options, lack of social services and entertainment facilities and a community largely composed of people from Britain adjusted well to life in the town; they were aware of what life in Elizabeth was likely to be and did not expect all of the things that migrants who were not informed about the town’s isolation did. In contrast to the experiences of isolation in Elizabeth, British migrants who settled in Glenelg came to an area that was much more like the type of environment on which Australian publicity was based. Oral histories once again showed that migrants who were informed about the area in which they were to settle were more likely to be satisfied.

The most significant contribution of this thesis to the existing scholarship and to the popular narrative of post-war British immigration has been to show the inaccuracy of perceptions that Australia’s publicity and information in Britain was typically misleading or inaccurate. By assessing migrants’ interactions with this publicity and

other information available to them alongside a number of variables that influenced their decisions to migrate, this thesis has shown that migrants' expectations were primarily (though not always) based on the environments to which they were accustomed in Britain. It shows that in most cases, British migrants' perceptions of whether South Australia and Australia in general met their expectations were largely dependent on the environments in which they initially lived in South Australia and how informed they were about conditions in these environments before they arrived.

In the future, a logical avenue for inquiry which would build upon this thesis would be to examine the expectations and experiences of non-British post-war migrants that settled in South Australia. The stories of British migrants should also be compared with those of migrants from other European nations that Australia had assisted passage agreements with between 1945 and 1982 and to which Australia's publicity campaign was extended. More extensive research should be made regarding Australia's use of publicity in countries from which it hoped to attract large numbers of migrants as opposed to countries where it only wanted to attract a certain type of migrant or only wanted to attract migrants for a limited period of time, such as India which was briefly discussed in this thesis. It is likely that this line of inquiry would lead to new and significant contributions being made to the historiography and debates surrounding the 'White Australia Policy'. It would be fascinating also to compare British experiences of migration publicity and its effect on their settlement with the experiences of DPs and other post-war refugee groups who were not exposed to a saturation of publicity and information material as British migrants were. The research conducted for the publicity chapter of this thesis could also be built upon by examining the differences in approaches used by Australian governments publicising the need for migration to the Australian public as opposed to trying to attract migrants from overseas. Finally, a comparison between the experiences of migrants such as those featured in this thesis with the experiences of British migrants who have come to Australia and South Australia in the twenty-first century would be a further significant inclusion into the history of British migrants in Australia.

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