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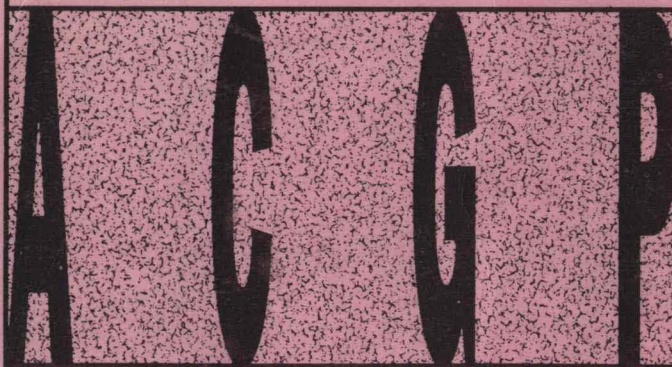
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ALIEN INTEGRATION: The Development of Administrative
Policy and Practice within the Australian Department of
Immigration since 1945

Ann-Mari Jordens

Administration, Compliance and Governability Program
Working Paper No. 6
August 1992



ADMINISTRATION, COMPLIANCE
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ABSTRACT

Since the Second World War approximately 5 million people have come to Australia as permanent settlers and immigrants have accounted for more than 40% of the increase in Australia's population. Although over 68% of Australia's overseas-born population were neither British subjects nor Irish citizens (and were therefore classified as aliens), most have successfully integrated into Australian legal, political, social and cultural institutions. This paper traces the development of an effective working relationship, or 'citizenship bargain', between the Australian government and alien immigrants by analysing the development of policies and strategies within the Department of Immigration designed to integrate aliens. It focuses particularly on the Department's responses to the problems aliens had in complying with Australian laws and regulations, and with gaining access to the civil and social rights to which they were entitled as permanent residents. It argues that the movement over the period from discriminatory policies and procedures to those which were (and were perceived to be) just and fair, facilitated alien compliance with the laws, regulations and social norms necessary for their integration into and acceptance by the Australian community.

ALIEN INTEGRATION: The Development of Administrative Policy and Practice within the Australian Department of Immigration 1945-75.

Introduction

In June 1990 the Australian population reached 17 million. Since the Second World War approximately 5 million people have come to Australia to settle permanently, and net migration has accounted for more than 40% of the increase in Australia's population during this period. While Great Britain and Ireland has been the principal source of immigrants to Australia, 68% of our overseas-born population arrived as citizens of countries of 100 other countries.¹ This demographic change has been accompanied by profound cultural and administrative changes.

The Australian government is now effectively interacting with aliens who have been admitted as permanent residents. The civil and social rights granted to permanent residents were gradually extended, and since 1984 have been largely identical with those of Australian citizens.² The extent of the satisfaction with, and integration into Australian society of all immigrants, is reflected by the high percentage becoming Australian citizens (69% of those eligible in December 1989), despite what may be

¹ Bureau of Immigration Research (BIR), *Australia's Population Trends and Prospects 1990*, Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS), Canberra, 1991, pp.xi-xii and 35-36.

² The concept of citizenship used in this paper is derived from T H Marshall's typology of citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed'. He identifies three characteristics of citizenship — civil, political and social rights. (T.H. Marshall, *Sociology at the crossroads and other essays*, London, 1963, pp.73-74 & 87.) My research focuses on the changes to the package of partial citizenship rights offered to aliens accepted for permanent residence in Australia since 1945.

seen as lack of instrumental motivations to take out citizenship. While immigrants from the main English-speaking countries have a low rate of citizenship, those from all other countries tend towards rates of 80-90% with lengthening periods of residence.³

Legislation and government policies (such as access and equity, multiculturalism and normalisation) now recognise the changed racial, ethnic and cultural composition of Australian society. Discriminatory provisions have been purged from legislation and administrators are required to respond to diversity by employing just and egalitarian procedures.

Effective communication has been established between the government and immigrants, largely through politically powerful ethnic organisations who articulate, and press for, migrant interests. The government continually monitors migrant needs and expectations, particularly through the Settlement and Ethnic Affairs Division of the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (DILGEA) and through the Office of Multicultural Affairs of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The government informs migrants of their rights and responsibilities as permanent residents by providing information in translation and facilitates their access to mainstream services by providing interpreting facilities. Communication and integration is facilitated by a range of other government-funded settlement services, largely administered by Departments other than DILGEA. Compliance with Australian laws and regulations is now less costly to the alien and the government's immigration program has a high level of political approval. Australia now has a working 'social bargain' on citizenship which is constantly being reviewed and renegotiated.

³ M.D. Evans, 'Choosing to be a citizen: the time path of citizenship in Australia', Seminar paper presented to the Programme on Immigration and Ethnicity of the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, 24 August 1988, p.16; BIR, *Australian Citizenship Statistical Report no.1*, AGPS Canberra 1990, p.14; BIR news release, 28/90, 9 July 1990.

The concept of social bargain provides a useful framework within which to view the developing relationship between alien permanent residents and the State since the Second World War, and helps to explain why the definition of 'Australian citizen' has changed over time. It is a metaphor for the set of mutual expectations governing how actors affected by a government program should interact with one another. This interaction is altered by changes in the bargaining resources of the parties and by non-compliance with the bargain agreed on.

No policy is viable if the transaction costs are too high and as the costs of monitoring and enforcing compliance are usually prohibitive, the government aims to achieve voluntary or quasi-voluntary compliance (voluntary in that the actors choose to obey, quasi in that the non-compliant are subject to coercion). Such compliance is contingent on perceptions that the cost of complying is not too great, that the policy is fair, that the government is keeping its side of the bargain, and that others are also complying. This paper explores the Department of Immigration's role in constructing a citizenship bargain with aliens granted permanent resident status in Australia in the post war period.⁴

Initial Government Goals and Expectations 1945-51.

The establishment of an effective working relationship between the Australian government and its alien immigrant population was the result of a long learning process which began on 13 July 1945 with the creation of the Federal Department of Immigration under Arthur Calwell, its first Minister.

Although a number of reports and recommendations on a proposed post-war immigration program had originated from the Migration Committee between October 1943 and August 1945, in the opinion of Paul

⁴ The concept of a social bargain and the compliance theory used throughout this paper is drawn from the work of Margaret Levi. See *Of Rule and Revenue*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988; Levi and Stephen DeTray, *A Weapon Against War: Conscientious Objection in the US, Australia and France*, Administration, Compliance and Governability Program Working Paper no.4, May 1992.

Hasluck, the official historian of the 'home front' during the Second World War, the post-war immigration policy owed more to Calwell's energetic promotion than it did to any conscious wartime planning. From 17 May 1946 to 6 November 1961 the Department's culture was dominated by its Secretary T.H.E. Hayes. Hayes had been Director of the Australian War Memorial from 1939-42 and had subsequently worked in the Department of Defence.⁵

The immigration program, as presented to the Australian public by the Labor Government on 2 August 1945, was modest compared with what it was soon to become, and its underlying principles and organisation were conservative. It continued the pre-war racial principle of 'White Australia' and the preference for immigrants from the United Kingdom and northern Europe. As in the past, it was predominantly a government-assisted migration scheme and the numbers were to be kept to 1% of the population (70,000), equal to growth by natural increase.⁶ The administrative arrangements negotiated by the Commonwealth with the States in August 1946 were similar to those negotiated by the Commonwealth Immigration Office in 1920, which made the Commonwealth responsible for the recruiting of immigrants abroad and for their transport to Australia while the States were responsible for their reception and aftercare. The principal difference was that the Commonwealth, not the States, was responsible for placing them in employment.

Although Calwell presented the program to the electorate principally in terms of the importance of an increased population to Australia's future defence, and only incidentally referred to its economic implications, the aims of the program were clearly related to the Government's plans for post-war economic restructuring as outlined in its paper, 'Full Employment in Australia', tabled in Parliament on 30 May 1945.

⁵ The Migration Committee comprised representatives from the Departments of The Treasury, Post-War Reconstruction, External Affairs, Interior, Social Services and Repatriation. Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-45*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1970, p.522. Biographical information on Hayes from *Who's Who in Australia*, 1962.

⁶ Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, (CPD) House of Representatives (HR), vol. 184, pp.4911-15.

The Government was determined to take advantage of war-time industrial development and the need for post-war restructuring to lay the foundations of an economy which would no longer be vulnerable to the substantial pre-war fluctuations in levels of employment and in demand for the limited range of Australian exports. It envisaged close collaboration between State and Commonwealth Governments, employers and trade unions with the intention of:

building up the nation's capital equipment and stimulating the general level of consumption. At the same time private spending will be stimulated by a higher demand for goods and services and stable conditions for the maintenance of private capital expenditure ... This policy for full employment will maintain such a pressure of demand on resources that for the economy as a whole there will be a tendency towards a shortage of men instead of a shortage of jobs.

Not only was increased private capital expenditure to be encouraged, public capital would be invested to 'provide employment in many industries and in many parts of the country.' One of the principal economic aims was 'the development and diversification of Australian export markets for both primary and secondary products'.

In response to an International Labour Conference recommendation in May 1944, by May 1945 the Government was in the process of establishing a Commonwealth Employment Service in the Department of Labour and National Service. At the time of the establishment of the Department of Immigration an agreement in principle had been reached with the British Government for an assisted passage scheme for British migrants.⁷

Immigration policy formulation and monitoring was placed under the control of two bodies dominated by business and industry. The Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, established in February 1947, advised the Minister for Immigration on day-to-day administrative and legislative matters, and on the assimilation of migrants. It comprised

⁷ The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Full Employment in Australia*, tabled 30 May 1945, pp.6-10.

representatives of major employer and trade union bodies such as the Australian Council of Employers' Federations, the National Farmers' Union, the Associated Chambers of Manufacturers, the Australian Council of Trade Unions as well as community organisations representing ex-service or women's groups⁸. A second advisory body, the Immigration Planning Council, was established in January 1949. Also manned by recognised leaders in industry, its task was to plan and review progress in absorbing migrants into industry and development projects.⁹

The Department of Immigration prepared agendas, notes and did research for the meetings of the Council. Its officers attended its meetings and those of its sub-committees and took minutes and any executive action necessary. It did not have a policy formulation role until 2 July 1951. This administrative structure meant that the interests of Australian industry dominated early immigration policy making, and migrant interests were unheard.

On 19 December 1949 a Liberal government came to office, and Harold Holt became the new Minister for Immigration. The Liberal-Country Party Coalition remained in power until December 1972. By mid-1950 the Department of Immigration was working on a five year plan with an annual intake of at least 200,000¹⁰. The business interests advising the Minister, however, were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the type of immigrants admitted.

⁸ These organisations included the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA), the Australian Region of Ex-servicemen, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the National Council of Women, H E Holt, 'What Immigration Means to Australia', Parliamentary Paper printed 30 August 1956, p.9.

⁹ These leaders included the General-Manager and Director of BHP, the Chairman of the Building Industry Congress, the President of the Associated Chambers of Manufacturers, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Melbourne University, the President and the Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Managing Director of Mary Kathleen Uranium and the Chairman of the Sydney Stock Exchange the Council was replaced in September 1975 by the Australian Population and Immigration Council. H E Holt, 'What Immigration Means to Australia', Parliamentary Paper printed 30 August 1956, p.9.

¹⁰ T.H.E. Heyes to Minister, 31.8.1950, 142/5/2, Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) A445/1, Australian Archives, Canberra (AA).

Despite the systemic discrimination in favour of British migrants, by 1950 it had become evident that not only was Calwell's hope of one alien to every ten Britons an unrealisable ideal,¹¹ but that since the signing of an agreement with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) in July 1947, aliens had provided the major source of immigrants. Until the IRO charter expired on 30 June 1950 it funded the passages of 170,700 refugees to Australia. Although they were obliged to remain for two years in the employment in which they were placed by the government, their skills were not assessed and they were initially allocated work without regard to their qualifications. As the Secretary of the Immigration Department observed in 1951, when the Displaced Persons scheme had terminated, it had 'only incidentally' yielded skilled workers.¹²

A report jointly produced by a sub-committee of the Immigration Planning Council and the National Security Resources Board in 1951 proved very influential in redirecting future immigration planning. The members of the Immigration Planning Council's sub-committee were Sir John Storey, Chairman, A.J. Keast, General Manager of the Australian Aluminium Production Commission, Sir John Jenson, Chairman of British Automatic Telephone and Electric Pty Ltd., Sir Douglas Copeland, Vice Chancellor of the Australian National University, I.M. McLennan, General Manager, Broken Hill Proprietary and A.E. Monk, Permanent President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

They argued that the British migrants brought to Australia following the 1946 assisted passage agreement with Britain, had proved to be not the most desirable immigrants economically. British migrants were less productive as they included the greatest number of dependents and could not be directed into specific industries. The alien intake included a higher proportion of workers and, in the opinion of the Committee, their dependents 'would accept separation from the breadwinners and could be housed in holding centres established in existing former service camps and

¹¹ CPD, HR, v.189, p.508.

¹² Egon F. Kunz, *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians*, Australian National University Press, 1988, pp.16, 40, 152-3. T.H.E. Heyes to Minister, 31.8.1950 and 16.8.1951, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

... a lower standard of accommodation was acceptable to foreign immigrant workers.' The report also drew attention to the 30,000-35,000 foreign migrants who had arrived as full-fare passengers and could not be directed into employment. It recommended that severe restrictions be placed on migrants' ability to sponsor friends and relatives and that more single alien workers be selected by occupation to meet the particular needs of essential industries.¹³

It was evident by 1951 that the government's initial expectation of a 1% growth in population through the immigration of skilled workers, mainly from Britain and northern Europe, was unrealistic, and that it did not have sufficient control over the type of immigrant coming into the country to achieve its economic goals. It was also becoming increasingly evident in certain sections of the Department of Immigration that the predominantly alien immigrant population would not easily assimilate into the monolingual, Anglo-Celtic host community and that their needs were neither understood nor being represented in policy formulation by the industry-dominated advisory committees.

Integrating Aliens — Departmental Initiatives 1948-52.

Everyone living in Australia, whether an Australian citizens or not, was expected 'to know and obey the laws of Australia'¹⁴ According to one school of legal opinion the security of an aliens' right to stay in Australia, that is, their immunity from deportation, depended on his or her having been 'absorbed into the Australian community'. Compliance with a myriad legal and administrative requirements was, therefore, central to the process

¹³ Report of the joint meeting of the Sub-Committees of the Immigration Planning Council and the National Security Resources Board, Melbourne, 7.8.1951, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

¹⁴ Annex 1 to minute N.N. Drummond to the Secretary, Department of Immigration, on requirements for naturalisation, 20.1.1953, 146/9/9, CRS A445/1, AA. Notes on the requirements for naturalisations prepared by the Department of Immigration for distribution to the Directors, Reception and Holding Centres, State Offices etc, 7.10.1955, 58/66090, CRS A446/115, AA.

variously described by politicians and bureaucrats as 'assimilation', 'integration', 'absorption' or 'settlement'.¹⁵

As well as this very wide obligation, aliens had a range of social and civil rights, all of which were part of the full range of rights granted to Australian citizens and British subjects (usually referred to as 'privileges' in government publications). The package of partial citizenship rights granted to aliens in order to facilitate their integration expanded by 1975, but for much of the post-war period aliens had little opportunity to discover what their rights and obligations were. This information, so central to their ability to comply and to integrate into the host community, was not provided to them in any comprehensible form.

Australia provided no structural protection for minority rights in the form of a Bill of Rights or Constitutional guarantees. Until the recent enactment of anti-discrimination legislation at State and Federal levels, there have been no legal safeguards applicable to minority groups. While individual aliens could invoke Common Law, their access to legal remedies was often limited by lack of understanding of the system, its cost and its failure to provide for adequate interpreters and information in translation. Responsibility for the defence of the rights of migrants, therefore, lay with the Department of Immigration, which was responsible to Parliament for their assimilation and welfare.

In September 1949 Calwell presented to Parliament a rosy picture of the success with displaced persons were being 'absorbed into the social life of the community', and the readiness with which they were being accepted by Australians.¹⁶ Their problems were more apparent to his fledgling Department. It soon began to recognise that in order to understand the

¹⁵ The uncertainty surrounding when an alien could be deported was removed in 1984 when all immigrants became immune from deportation after 10 years residence in Australia. Before this date British immigrants could not be deported if they had resided in Australia more than 5 years and aliens could be deported after any period of residence. Legal debate on the extent of powers of the Migration Act over aliens is summarised in Jean I. Martin, *The Migrant Presence: Australian Responses 1947-1977*, Research report for the National Population Inquiry, Studies in Sociology:2, Sydney, George Allen and Unwin, 1978, pp.16-18.

¹⁶ CPD, HR, v.204, p.143, 3 September 1949.

difficulties migrants had in integrating into Australian society and in complying with Australian requirements it needed to intervene more actively and to allocate resources to meet these needs.

a) The Establishment of the Social Welfare Section.

There are many different agents of administrative change: in this case administrative restructuring was initiated by one particular fairly low-ranking officer. In the latter part of 1948, Hazel Dobson, a social worker employed by the Department of Immigration, investigated the living conditions and problems of the more established alien groups, as well as those of newly arrived refugees. She made two important recommendations — that Good Neighbour Committees be formed to cooperate with the Department in the general work of assimilation, and that a Section be established within the Department composed mainly of social workers, to deal with assimilation problems on a more professional level.¹⁷

Initially the Department comprised only two Divisions — Restricted Immigration and Encouraged Migration. By 1948 the former had been renamed the Aliens Control Division. Dobson's second proposal was forwarded to the Assistant Secretary, Encouraged Migration Division, on 19 October 1948 by G.C. Watson, who observed that 'The development of the Displaced Persons' Scheme 'has brought in its train many problems that have previously not been encountered in this Department'. He recommended the appointment of one social worker to each reception and training centre, and in the proposed holding centres for dependants, coordinated by a senior social worker in Central Office in Canberra. He also recommended the establishment of Commonwealth Migration Officers in each State 'to deal with after-care problems of migrants who have passed out into the community.'¹⁸

¹⁷ Report of the Social Welfare Section of the Department of Immigration, Melbourne, 26.3.1952, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

¹⁸ 50/3/17477, CRS A434, AA.

In June 1949 a Social Welfare Section was created within the now renamed Aliens Assimilation Division of the Department of Immigration, with an approved establishment of 39 social workers. Dobson was appointed Officer in Charge in Canberra, and one senior social worker was appointed in each State (except Tasmania) Between them they were allotted 26 Grade II and 6 Grade 1 positions. All appointees were required to have a Diploma in Social Studies and a minimum of five years experience. Only 16 of the positions were allocated to city offices, 19 positions required the officer to live full-time in the centres, and 15 positions were earmarked for remote country areas. It was intended that each centre have its own full-time social worker.¹⁹

This grand vision rapidly ran foul of social and economic realities. Except for a few ex-servicemen who became social workers under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, all qualified social workers were women, many of them married with families and unable to work in country areas. As members of a relatively new profession they were in demand by agencies which offered city employment and better salaries than the Commonwealth. The Department of Immigration was therefore unable to fill all its positions and by 1952 it employed only 20 social workers to cater for the needs of the 575, 000 immigrants who had been brought to Australia since January 1947. The ability of monolingual social workers to deal with the often severe problems of European migrants was limited, and interpreters were rare. The absence of adequate English language training and the non-recognition by Australian universities of overseas educational qualifications prevented migrants from qualifying as social workers.²⁰

¹⁹ Statement by the Social Welfare Section prepared for the first meeting Committee of the Immigration Advisory Council on Social Welfare, 22.4.1952, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

²⁰ Verbatim notes of Social Welfare Committee and reports of interested organisations at meeting in Canberra 1.2.1952, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA. Statistics of immigrants from Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australia and Immigration 1788-1988*, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.36.

b) Co-Opting Voluntary Organisations — the 1950 Citizenship Convention and the Good Neighbour Movement.

The Department of Immigration did not intend to supply all the settlement assistance required by migrants and was determined to have as much of the burden as possible taken up by community organisations and voluntary workers.²¹ It therefore took up Dobson's second recommendation and promoted the establishment of the Good Neighbour Movement at the first Citizenship Convention, held in Canberra 23-27 January 1950.

The primary object of the Convention was to promote the political acceptability of the migration program among the electorate. As Calwell explained to the Prime Minister, in proposing the Convention, its intention was:

the promotion of a nation-wide movement towards a deeper appreciation of the privileges and obligations of Australian citizenship, and the realisation that our lack of numbers places upon Australians the particular responsibility of sharing these privileges and obligations with the many thousands of newcomers now reaching our shores ...²²

The Prime Minister repeated this political emphasis in his invitation to each State Premier to attend the Convention:

We have adopted the principle that success can be achieved only if the newcomers are accepted whole-heartedly by the Australian public and that the main channel for securing the practical interest of the ordinary citizen is through the Churches and voluntary organisations.²³

Secondary objectives, Calwell explained, were to devise strategies for, and coordinate the activities of the churches and various voluntary organisations to achieve the assimilation of aliens, and to 'offer every

²¹ T.H.E. Heyes to Mrs Kumm, 8.1.1952, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

²² A.A. Calwell & J.B. Chifley 25.8.1949, 146/1/1, CRS A4 45/1, AA

²³ Draft (letter) Prime Minister to each State Premier, 25.8.1949, 146/1/1, CRS A445/1, AA

encouragement and facility to these people to attain the standard of citizenship necessary to enable them to become British subjects and Australian citizens, in the fuller sense and not merely in the legal sense of the words.'²⁴

Calwell encapsulated the notion of assimilation in his statement to Chifley that through the involvement of community groups:

all may contribute their share in the achievement of the ideal of one Australian family, devoid of foreign communities, thus preserving our homogeneity and solidarity as a nation.²⁵

'I am most anxious that Australia should set an example to the rest of the world in overcoming assimilation problems', he concluded.

The National Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), John Tolston Massey, was appointed to organise the Convention and to establish the Good Neighbour Committees. Massey's qualifications for this temporary appointment were that he had been a welfare officer on two ships carrying British immigrants to Australia, Executive Secretary for Immigration with the English YMCA and he had visited a displaced persons camp in the British zone in Germany.²⁶

The alien objects of the Convention's attention were to be exhibited but not consulted. Calwell had indicated to Chifley that those attending the Convention would have an opportunity to meet groups of New Australians and 'gain a first-hand knowledge of the arts, crafts, and musical talent with which they are enriching this country'. Their opinion on how to meet their settlement difficulties was not initially welcome.

To assimilationists 'national groups' were anathema. Massey reported to Heyes that Dr S.W. Kreiger of a Sydney Jewish organisation, a representative of the Greek Community and three members of the Greek ex-servicemen's organisation had asked to be involved in the Convention.

²⁴ A.A. Calwell & J.B. Chifley 25.8.1949, 146/1/1, CRS A4 45/1, AA

²⁵ A.A. Calwell & J.B. Chifley 25.8.1949, 146/1/1, CRS A4 45/1, AA

²⁶ Memorandum, T.H.E. Heyes to the Secretary of the Public Service Board, 30.8.1949, 146/1/1, CRS A445/1, AA

Massey believed that their participation and that of any other 'national groups' was untimely. For that reason he had not contacted the Italo-Australian Club. The Secretary agreed with Massey's judgement, noting that the Greek ex-servicemen would be adequately represented by the President of the RSSAILA.²⁷ The most evident aliens at the Convention were dancers, singers, musicians and guardians of the handicraft exhibition, although one of the delegates was a Russian bishop who had come to Australia as a displaced person.²⁸ His presence must have been inadvertant for in his concluding address to the 1953 Citizenship Convention the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt announced that 'New Australians' had attended the Convention for the first time and he hoped more would participate in the future. Their names, and the organisations they represented were not recorded.²⁹

c) Restructuring and Rethinking 1952 — The Immigration Advisory Council's Review of Social Welfare.

By 1951 the Department had become aware that its social workers were its chief source of information on the settlement needs of migrants. Through them it learnt of migrants' financial, employment, accommodation and marital difficulties, of migrants with tuberculosis, mental illness and other health problems. Its 20 social workers bore the brunt of the Department's responsibility to assimilate the 78,000 migrants accommodated in its hostels and reception, training and holding centres throughout Australia. They helped immigrants to comply with laws such as those relating to adoption, maintenance, child welfare, house and land purchasing, eviction and debt repayment and to access of such services as vocational guidance, tertiary education, Baby Health Centres and English classes. The needs of unassisted

²⁷ J.T. Massey to T.H.E. Heyes, 22.11.1949, 146/1/1, CRS A445/1, AA.

²⁸ Letters to the directors of migrant centres arranging for alien entertainers, 4-5.1.50, Minute by R Kingston 'Observations on discussion groups and the general attitudes of Delegates', Australian Citizenship Convention, 31.1.1950, list of invitees to Convention, 146/1/1, CRS A445/1, AA.

²⁹ Transcript of proceedings and resolutions of the 1953 Citizenship Convention, 20-23.1 1953, p.5, 146/9/9, CRS A 445/1 AA.

migrants, and the growing numbers of those who had left government-provided accommodation were unknown and unmet.

By December 1951 the Department of Immigration also recognised that its Social Welfare Section would not be able to cope with the demands of the immigration program which that year reached 185,000.³⁰ It therefore sought the assistance of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (IAC) to conduct an enquiry into 'the scope and nature of an adequate social welfare service to all immigration centres and workers hostels' and with an appropriate establishment within the Department of Immigration to deal with social welfare matters.³¹

This enquiry was largely dominated by women. It was chaired by Mrs J.G. Norris of the IAC and included Mrs F.G. Krumm, President of the Young Women's Christian Association, and representatives of the Australian Council of Social Workers, the Australian Council of Social Service and its Victorian and South Australian branches, the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section and Ms Olga Leschen, a pre-school worker in holding centres. Professor G.W. Paton, Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University joined the Committee in April 1952.³²

The review was conducted in the context of a recession which created unemployment for the first time since the Depression of the 1930s. The migrant intake, planned in August 1951 at 150,000 was curtailed by Cabinet in July 1952 and the intake from all sources for 1953 limited to 80,000. Government expenditure on migration was reduced and three migrant reception centres closed.

In January 1952 the management of migrant hostels had been taken over by Commonwealth Hostels Ltd, a company responsible to the Department of Labour and National Service. The provision of social

³⁰ H.E. Holt, 'What Immigration Means to Australia', Parliamentary Paper printed 30 8.1956, p.10.

³¹ T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary, Department of Immigration, to Colonel R.R. Ryan, Chairman, Commonwealth Advisory Council on Social Welfare, 24.12.51, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

³² Notes of meeting of Social Welfare Committee meeting 1.2.1952, and Minute by M.F. Manning, 7.4.1952, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

welfare services to hostels, however, remained the responsibility of the Department of Immigration. This division of responsibilities disappointed the Victorian Council for Social Services, which believed that social problems of migrants in hostels should be the responsibility of hostel administrators.³³

The Department sought to supplement its own welfare professionals with those funded by non-government organisations. The Social Welfare Section of the Department advised that although the primary responsibility for the care of migrants lay with the Department, cases should be delegated to other organisations whenever possible. This would not only alert immigrants to the existence of community facilities, it would serve the political purpose of 'encouraging the community ... to play its part in Australia's huge migration program.'³⁴

Reports prepared by the Social Welfare Section for this enquiry revealed that by 1952 Departmental social workers had come to recognise the hopelessness of dealing with the problems of large numbers of migrants on a case-by-case basis, as they had been trained. It recommended the allocation of staff to undertake research and formulate policy on classes of problems in order that the resources necessary to deal with them could be coordinated. By this means, the Section argued, Central Office could be kept informed of important developments, and the findings of social workers could be taken into consideration in policy formulation. The economic costs to the Department of reorganisation and staffing would be insignificant compared with the political costs of not dealing adequately with integration difficulties of immigrants. It pointed out that:

These problems not only present a serious threat to the successful assimilation of the individual or groups concerned, but they are also focal points for the spreading of dissatisfaction among the migrants,

³³ Boyd Graham, VCSS, to Minister 15.11.1951, 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA; Paper on the Immigration Program prepared by the Immigration Planning Council, 18.12.1953, 142/5/2, CRS A 445/1, AA.

³⁴ Report of the Social Welfare Section, 26.3.1952, p.2, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

or amongst the general public where anti-social behaviour is involved or community resources over-burdened.³⁵

The Social Welfare Section also drew the Commonwealth Advisory Committee's attention to the need to provide settlement assistance to migrants outside hostels in the general community. It also urged to recognise 'new alien groupings', a term it used to refer to the 'considerable degree of alien concentration around essential industries and special projects' which it regarded as 'inevitable for the present' despite 'the most earnest efforts to avoid it'. It argued for the provision of specialised services for alien migrants arguing that 'their ignorance of the language and customs of the country and ... total lack of knowledge of the many facilities available to meet various needs in the community' caused the problems of the ordinary citizen to be multiplied many times for the alien.³⁶

Three years of practical experience in dealing with migrants' settlement problems had resulted in a questioning within the Department of both the universalist assumptions underlying prevailing suspicion of 'national groups', and the individualist approach to the provision of migrant welfare on a case-by-case basis. Such attitudinal changes were essential before systemic solutions could be provided for categories of migrant disadvantage.

These changed perceptions at the lower levels of the administration, however, had little practical impact on senior government administrators, particularly on the issue of the extension of the provision of social welfare services to non-assisted migrants. When the Citizenship Convention in 1952 recommended to the Minister for Social Services that a body be set up to investigate and deal with migrant social welfare cases not covered by current social services, its suggestion that the government was responsible for the delivery of social welfare services to migrants outside the hostels was flatly rejected. The Minister replied that 'this type of work would be

³⁵ Report of Social Welfare Section, 26.3.1952, section 2, p. 8, 140/5/6, A445, AA.

³⁶ Social Welfare Section reports, 26.3, 22.4 and 20.5.1952; Notes for the Secretary 3.4.1952, 140/5/6, CRS A445, AA.

more appropriately left in the hands of private and voluntary organizations who are already doing splendid work in this field'.³⁷

d) The Limitations of Voluntary Organisations — The Victorian Council of Social Services and the Good Neighbour Council.

The Department's hopes of being able to rely on voluntary agencies for the delivery of settlement assistance were considerably dampened by the results of a six-month trial involving voluntary social workers contracted by the Victorian Council of Social Services and the Good Neighbour Council.

In 1951 the Citizens Advice Bureau was established by the Victorian Council for Social Service. Modelled on the British Citizens' Advice Bureaux founded during the Second World War, it was intended to provide citizens with information on personal problems, on the interpretation of legislation, and with assistance in gaining access to the services provided by statutory or voluntary bodies. Funded by donations and staffed largely by volunteers, its paid staff included trained social workers.³⁸

In May 1951 the Vice-President of the Victorian Council for Social Workers, Lady Herring, spoke to the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, on the possibility of the newly formed body providing its services to migrants in hostels. The scheme was initially conceived of as meeting the needs of British migrants, particularly in camps located in isolated areas.³⁹

The Department agreed that for a trial period of six months, unpaid social workers selected by the Council from its own staff, the Psychiatric Clinic, the Catholic Social Service Bureau, the Department of Labour and National Service, the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the South Melbourne Council, would regularly visit hostels in suburban Melbourne only. Their

³⁷ Report of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, Committee established to consider social service benefits payable to non-British migrants, 16 April 1953. Minister's reply to the Citizenship Convention was dated 2 September 1952, 140/5/21, CRS A445, AA.

³⁸ S.Greig Smith, Provisional Director, Citizen's Advice Bureau, information leaflet, 4.4.1951, 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

³⁹ H.Holt to N.Shaw, 18.5.1951, G.W. Paton, President, Victorian Council of Social Service to H.Holt, 21.5.1951, 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

visits were coordinated by the Good Neighbour Council and their transport was supplied by the Department of Immigration. Although this service was extended to aliens, no mention was made of interpreters, and the focus remained on the needs of British migrants. As the social workers were only available during working hours they were of little use to the majority of migrants who were employed.⁴⁰

After three months the advisory service was withdrawn from five of the hostels on the grounds that both the men and the women who lived in them were working. The Council recommended the publication of a small booklet on community facilities for distribution to newly arrived migrants, and the appointment of a social worker to advise the management of the hostels on social issues.

Although its recommendations were not supported by the Department, both bodies continued to cooperate in the collection and supply of information on services available to migrants. The Council's *Directory of Social Services in Melbourne* was purchased by the Department for its each of its social workers and its London office, and the Council assisted the Department in bringing its card index of social services up to date.⁴¹

The discouraging results of this experiment revealed the limitations of voluntary advisory bodies using unpaid (if professional) services to deliver settlement assistance to migrants in hostels.

⁴⁰ Minutes of meeting 23.5.1951 on establishment of Social Welfare Advisory Service visits to migrant hostels, 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

⁴¹ Boyd Graham to H.Holt, 7.3.1952; VCSS Annual Report 1951-52, VCSS circular on Directory of Social Services, 20.5.1953; R.E. Armstrong, Assistant Secretary, Assimilation Division to Secretary, Department of Immigration, 7.6.1951; report of Victorian Council of Social Service on advisory service to hostels, 22 October 1951, minute by Hazel Dobson 15.11.1951 (her advice formed the basis of the advice from the Secretary, Department of Immigration, to the VCSS, 21.12.1951), 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

Administrative Responses to Involuntary Non-Compliance — Non-Working Mothers 1948-52.

One of the first compliance problems to confront the Department of Immigration was that of non-compliance by women refugees with their obligation to work. In this case the impetus for change came from another government department.

In August 1948 the Commonwealth Employment Service sought advice from the Commonwealth Migration Officer (CMO) in Sydney on female displaced persons who had been brought to Australia under contract to work but who were unable to comply with the terms of their contract as they were pregnant or nursing infants. This was a matter for the Department of Immigration as such workers needed the approval of the Department of Immigration's Regional Director before they could accept work.⁴²

The problem had been discussed at a conference of the Commonwealth Migration Officers on 23-25 August 1948, and the recommendation by the CMO in Sydney that married women in this position should be released from their employment obligation was approved by the Secretary on 27 October 1948.⁴³

From then on married pregnant women whose husbands could find independent accommodation for them were released from their contract. If their husband was working in an area where accommodation could not be found he would be transferred to a region where it would be easier to find. If in an advanced state of pregnancy, women whose husbands could not provide them with accommodation were sent at their husband's expense to a special maternity centre at Bathurst, NSW. Those in an earlier

⁴² Memorandum, E.Morrison, CMO Sydney, to Department of Immigration, Canberra, 30.8.1948, 50/3/17477, CRS A434/1, AA.

⁴³ Memorandum, S.J. Dempsey to Assistant Secretary, Encouraged Migration Division, 25.10.1948, 50/3/17477, CRS A434/1, AA.

stage were sent to a holding centre to await confinement in a community hospital.⁴⁴

This solved the problem for women with male financial support. The contractual obligations of those without such support remained.

Among the suggested roles for the newly appointed social workers of the Department of Immigration's Social Welfare Section, when it was created in June 1949, was 'cooperation with the Commonwealth Employment Service in the placement in employment of special or difficult cases' in reception and training centres, and 'dealing with the social problems of pregnant women and mothers of young children (both married and unmarried)'.⁴⁵

In July 1949 the Victorian Council for Social Welfare drew the Section's attention to the numbers of supporting mothers in Bonegilla Hostel seeking accommodation for their children in Victorian institutions so that they would be free to work. The Secretary's reply focussed on the Department's policy on family reunion. The number of widows was small and their separation from their children could be avoided through liaison between non-government organisations and Departmental Social workers, he concluded optimistically. The problem did not go away.⁴⁶

Reports from all States in 1950-51 revealed widespread concern among social workers with the frequent breakdown of migrants' marriages. Most found the prolonged separation of husbands and wives in hostels a precipitating factor and recommended the establishment of hostels for families. Lack of interpreters, of interviewing facilities in hostels, and of support organisations, made dealing with these problems difficult for social workers.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Extract from summary of proceedings of CMOs conference 23-25.8.1948, 50/3/17477, CRS A434/1, AA.

⁴⁵ G.C. Watson to Assistant Secretary, Encouraged Migration Division, 19.10.1948, 50/3/17477, CRS A434, AA.

⁴⁶ Victorian Council for Social Services to Hazel Dobson, Officer in Charge, Social Welfare Section, Aliens Assimilation Division, 14.7.1948; reply by T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary, 27.7.1949, 276/1/9 CRS A445, AA.

⁴⁷ Social workers' reports are at 276/2/7, CRS A445, AA.

By March 1951 the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Department of Immigration had found employment for 800 supporting mothers (generally referred to as 'widows'), largely as the result of widespread publicity given to an appeal by the Minister. Many were employed as staff in immigration centres or continued to live there while working in adjacent towns. Of these only 12 had more than one child.⁴⁸

Almost 700 more remained in the centres unemployed, untrained and with a poor knowledge of English. They met their especially reduced weekly accommodation fees of 22/6 from child endowment of 5/- per child, unemployment benefits of 30/- or, in the case of women who had never worked, Special Benefits. Aliens were ineligible for widows' pensions. Many fell into debt. There were no training or childcare facilities in the Centres, so even attending English classes, held only at night, was difficult.

Trained to deal with problems on a case by case basis, social workers initially tended to see both the causes and the solutions to this problem as lying with the individual women, not in the structural inequalities they all confronted. This is evident in a minute of 9 March 1951 to the Secretary of the Department of Immigration by the Officer-in-Charge of the Social Welfare Section in Canberra, Hazel Dobson. It was 'impossible to tackle the problem adequately with no precise knowledge of the personal factors involved and of the total situation as affected by those personal factors. It is, in fact, one of the 'human' problems which cannot be dealt with by files and figures alone, but by field officers with a close personal knowledge of the people concerned.'⁴⁹

She recommended the provision of more social workers to research and analyse the problem. Until a permanent solution was arrived at, the assistance of voluntary organisations to teach hobbies, handicrafts, childcare and hygiene, she believed, would prevent time hanging so heavily on the women's hands. As marriage was the only really satisfactory solution, social and church workers and Good Neighbour

⁴⁸ Report, Hazel Dobson to Secretary, 9.3.1951, 276/2/10, CRS A445, AA.

⁴⁹ Report, Hazel Dobson to Secretary, 9.3.1951, 276/2/10, CRS A445, AA.

Councils should be urged to create opportunities for widows to meet suitable men, she concluded.

Departmental social workers in a number of States were requested to conduct a survey of single parents in particular hostels, and to suggest solutions. The only male social worker, attached to the isolated Cunderdin holding centre in Western Australia, regarded all but three of the 30 women he interviewed as unemployable because of their lack of English and their resistance to placing their children (a total of 56) in orphanages. As no employment offering accommodation was available, he recommended their employment on the staff of the centre or in day work in the town. He also believed that they should be encouraged to do dressmaking and knitting to produce handicrafts to be sold in the Centre. His preferred solution was to make the children wards of the State, as that would offer them permanency. This might, he observed, create resentment in the mothers. Allowing them to work in the city while living in the Centre where a creche could be provided, would, he anticipated, arouse criticism that migrant widows were treated better than Australians.

The social worker from Bonegilla, Victoria, the only hostel in that State to which a social worker had been specifically attached, reported that there were 40 women with 66 dependent children there. She also observed that women with more than one child (half of the group) were almost impossible to place in employment. A number had found employment only by placing their children in orphanages at their own expense. Some kept the youngest child and institutionalised the older. Some siblings were placed in different institutions because of their ages. Women who had tuberculosis were especially difficult to place as the CES received allocations for domestics only, and such women were prevented by law from working as domestics or in the preparation of food. In the absence of child care facilities these women were unable to work in factories. Few women were willing even to consider having their children adopted and most showed 'a great desire to work and support their

families themselves', although most were by education and experience qualified only to work as domestics or in factories.⁵⁰

The reports of social workers from other States were similarly dismal.

The results of this enquiry were presented by Ms Dobson to the Secretary on 9.10.1951. The immediate problem was solved for the Department in Victoria by the opening of a factory opposite the Benalla hostel. Although in May 1951 the Department of Immigration was surveying pre-school requirements in all holding centres and hostels, no creche was available at Benalla, so women with children under three could not benefit.⁵¹ Ms Dobson reiterated her belief that marriage was the only permanent avenue to the absorption of widows into the community.

Her report to the Secretary a month later suggests that she was beginning to look for systemic solutions to this problem. She indicated that if widows from elsewhere in Australia were transferred to Benalla it might be possible to establish a creche there. She did not, however, favour the concentration of widows in one camp as it would impede their chances of meeting husbands. She recognised that formal two-hour English classes at night were unsuitable for women with dependent children who worked all day. At Benalla only 10% of widows attended them. She recommended shorter and more entertaining classes run by voluntary groups.⁵²

The Victorian Council for Social Services continued to pressure the Minister for Immigration on behalf of unmarried women and widows under contract to work. In 1952 it wrote: 'A pronouncement of policy is required as to whether the Government is prepared to mitigate a hard headed business deal by some element of sentimental alleviation in cases of hardship of this type.'⁵³

⁵⁰ Hazel Dobson to Mr Armstrong, 15.11.195, 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA, and Report, Hazel Dobson to Secretary, 9.3.1951, 276/2/10, CRS A445.

⁵¹ Minutes of meeting to discuss the formation of a Social Welfare Advisory Service to Migrant Hostels in the Metropolitan area of Melbourne, 23.5.1951, p.3, 276/1/9, CRS A 445, AA.

⁵² Dobson's report of 9.3.1951, 276/2/10, CRS A445, AA.

⁵³ Boyd Graham, President, VCSS to H Holt, 7.3.1952, 276/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

Women heads of families were not complying with their obligation to work, to learn English and to become absorbed into the Australian community. This non-compliance was clearly involuntary. The fundamental problem lay in the Anglo-Saxon cultural values, reflected in the bureaucracy, which rigidly adhered to the notions of individualism and universalism.⁵⁴

Social workers trained in this tradition were the only avenue of advice to administrators with the responsibility of achieving compliance. The small numbers of monolingual social workers working with migrants in selected hostels, trained to see problems as those of individuals to be solved on a case by case basis and to avoid solutions to aliens' problems which were not universally available to all Australians, had no hope of providing constructive and economically viable solutions to the problems of distinctive categories of disadvantage. They clearly recognised the political repercussions of providing services such as housing and creche facilities for alien widows and unmarried mothers when they were in short supply or unavailable to the wider community. These alien women highlighted the unresponsiveness of Australian culture and structures to the needs of working women in general and in particular of women in the community attempting to provide for children without male support.

By 1953, however, social workers in daily contact with the practical effects of the lack of an economically viable and coherent policy on supporting mothers and other non-compliers in the hostels they serviced, had been forced to reexamine their assumptions and to seek a general solution to the special problems of groups of migrants through the formulation of consistent policies.

Revising the Intake — Increasing Compliance by Achieving Greater Control over the Selection of Aliens.

⁵⁴ Laksiri Jayasuriya, 'Citizenship, Democratic Pluralism and Ethnic Minorities in Australia', in Richard Nile, ed., *Immigration and the Politics of Ethnicity and Race in Australia and Britain*, Bureau of Immigration Research (Australia) Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London, 1991, p.31.

In its report to the Minister for Immigration of 10 August 1951 the Immigration Planning Council suggested that the compliance problems confronting the government were the result of its lack of adequate control over the selection of immigrants. It also argued that the demands made by migrant families and non-directed migrants for capital facilities, housing and community services were contributing to inflation, as they were not being fully offset by communal savings or overseas borrowings. It suggested that the inflationary effects of the immigration could be reduced by setting a target of 150,000 immigrants for 1952, of which 95,000 should be workers. As many of these workers as possible should be placed under an obligation to work in approved employment, and be selected overseas in classes related to Australia's employment needs. The Council argued that as the Commonwealth Nomination Scheme for British migrants made the heaviest call upon resources relative to the gain in production, it should be substantially reduced.⁵⁵

In its Cabinet submission of 16 August 1951, the Department of Immigration was critical of the Sub-committee's emphasis on the inflationary effects of immigration. It presented a plan upon which it had been working for over a year which, as the Secretary informed the Minister, would enable the program for the first time since the war 'to select directable migrants from occupational categories to meet the requirements of primary and secondary industry.' It would not be inflationary, as suggested by the the report and in any case, it argued, immigration planning should be considered not in terms of inflation 'which can and should be attacked in other ways, but in terms of national survival'.⁵⁶

The Department's plan involved the negotiation of immigration agreements with European source countries. It anticipated that the Commonwealth Nomination Scheme might maintain the current level of British arrivals at a maximum of 80,000. Additional immigrants, to

⁵⁵ Report of the joint meeting of the Sub-Committees of the Immigration Planning Council and the National Security Resources Board, Melbourne, 7.8.1951, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

⁵⁶ Minute, Secretary to Minister and Cabinet submission no 79, 16.8.1951, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

replace the displaced persons no longer funded by the soon to be disbanded International Refugee Organisation, could be sought by arriving at cost-sharing arrangements with Holland, Italy, Western Germany and Austria. 'The types of migrants that we most need are young single men, skilled and unskilled, for employment in primary and secondary industries and in development and construction projects which are acutely short of labour, and single women who are readily absorbed in factory, institutional and domestic employment,' the Secretary informed the Minister in August 1950.

The Departmental submission seeking approval for inter-governmental negotiations to commence, reflected prevailing Australian cultural biases. Dutch migrants were considered 'fine types who are readily integrated into the community'. Southern Italians, particularly Sicilians and Calabrians, were considered to be 'not the most desirable types from an Australian viewpoint', although both skilled and unskilled workers from both central and northern Italy were considered very suitable, particularly for tunnelling work on the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. While the desired intake of assisted immigrants was set at 25,000 from Holland and the same number from Germany and Austria, a target of only 15,000 was set for assisted Italian immigrants.

More stringent conditions were to apply to Germans and Italians than to Dutch. While the former would be required to sign an undertaking to work for two years in the employment to which they were allocated by the Commonwealth, and be granted permanent residency 'subject to proving themselves to be suitable in every respect for settlement during that period', Dutch migrants would be merely required to 'engage in employment approved by the Commonwealth for a similar period'.⁵⁷ Assisted passage agreements were signed with the Netherlands in February, and with Italy in March 1951, and with West Germany in August 1952. Agreements with other source countries followed.

⁵⁷ Submission, T.H.E. Heyes to Minister, 31.8.1950, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

German Immigration

The Department of Immigration was particularly anxious to tap into the estimated 10 million German refugees who had not come under the protection of the IRO, and which could be neither absorbed into the German economy nor funded as emigrants by the German government. These refugees were either volksdeutsche, people of German ethnic origin who had been forced out of Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary and the Baltic States during and after the 1939-45 war, or Germans who had been expelled from those regions of Germany and Austria which had become part of the Eastern Block.⁵⁸

The Labor government's access to information on these potential migrants had been limited by the severing of the flow of all intelligence information by the American Government's Central Intelligence Agency after January 1948. The ban was lifted for information classified 'confidential' and below within days of the Menzies' Liberal government coming to power on 10 December 1949.⁵⁹ Probably one of the earliest documents released to Australia under the new arrangement was a report received by the Department of Immigration on German refugees and expellees prepared by the United States Directorate of Intelligence in Germany. Dated 24.9.1949 it advised that many of these refugees were farmers and professional men who could not be assimilated in Germany. They were also politically acceptable to the Australian government as the report advised that they were anti-communist, had the 'traditional right-wing "radicalism" of the German middle classes' and were 'almost bound to go in the direction of the right'.⁶⁰ The Department was most enthusiastic about this potential source. The Secretary informed the Minister that:

⁵⁸ Submission, T.H.E. Heyes to Minister, 31.8.1950, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

⁵⁹ Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987, pp 6-7.

⁶⁰ Office of the Military Government for Germany, US Office of the Military Government for Germany, US Office of the Director of Intelligence, Weekly Intelligence Report No. 176, 'Refugees and Expellees: some special problems', 24.9.1949, p. 34. 194/2/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

Many reports have been received from official and unofficial sources to the effect that some of the finest potential migrants to be found anywhere in the world are in Germany. Australia as one of the few immigrant receiving countries could take the pick of them. As well as gaining from an immigration viewpoint, international goodwill would accrue to the Commonwealth by helping to absorb the surplus population in Germany who, under present conditions, are without a future.⁶¹

The Department was acutely aware of the need to manage any immigration intake from Germany carefully. Proposals to encourage the immigration of Germans resulted in it accumulating ten files of protest letters during the period 1949-51. Many were from Australians who had lost loved ones during the war, some, like the signatories of a protest organised by the NSW Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women expressed doubts about the efficacy of the screening process.⁶²

Despite the political sensitivity of the issue, Cabinet decided in mid-1950 to approve the admission of workers from former enemy countries without assistance.⁶³ As a result of this decision an agreement was reached with the West German Government and between July 1950 and June 1952 approximately 5,000 single Germans arrived as Special Project Workers. Without assistance from either the Australian or German governments or from any international body, they funded their passages by becoming indebted to sponsoring employers and repayments were deducted fortnightly from their wages. The twelve bodies which sponsored these workers included private firms and public instrumentalities such as the Department of Railways in Victoria and South Australia, the Commonwealth Railways and the Snowy Mountains Authority.

Most of these workers settled permanently in Australia and became further indebted to their employers to bring out their families and to house

⁶¹ Submission, T.H.E. Heyes to Minister, 31.8.1950, p.5, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

⁶² Files 194/2/1-10 contain letters of protest against German immigration. The organised protest referred to in the text was responsible for letters received in early 1951 which are in 194/2/8, CRS A445/1, AA.

⁶³ Submission, T.H.E. Heyes to Minister, 31.8.1950, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

them. They were possibly the most disadvantaged immigrants in Australia and neither their psychological nor their economic integration was facilitated by the Department of Immigration's handling of their appeal for assistance in late 1952.

Following the signing of an assisted migration agreement with Germany in August 1952 dependents of Special Project Workers who had not already been sponsored (approximately 236 persons) became eligible to have their passage to Australia paid. This was of little use to those workers who had already become indebted to bring out their 536 dependents, or to those who had already arranged the passages of 269 relatives. Despite the advocacy of the Lutheran World Federation, which had advanced £30,000 for travel loans, the Commonwealth Railways, which had lent £25,000 to 88 of its workers, and the Australian Workers' Union, their appeal for assisted passages for those relatives already en route was rejected. The German Ambassador did not support them and he assured the Department that it could rely on his support to explain the position to his nationals.

While legally correct, this decision created perceptions of procedural unfairness. Departmental administrators had achieved a small financial saving but had raised the cost of compliance for the workers. Consequently, they increased the risk of these workers reneging on their financial obligations and, almost certainly, decreased both their willingness, and their ability, to integrate into their workplace and into Australian society in general.

A Departmental social worker who visited Special Project Workers in their isolated camps along the Trans-Australian Railway in October 1953 reported that this decision had resulted in poor morale among this group. Some were indebted for about £500 and were very depressed when they worked out how long it would take them to pay their commitments. 'They are tending to become timeservers and are looking forward to the time they will be able to leave the railways,' he reported. They had no complaints about their working conditions but felt deeply about their

financial burdens. They had no money to socialise with Australians and became withdrawn and neurotic, he observed.⁶⁴

Southern Europeans

Both the government's selection processes and the integration prospects of immigrants from southern Europe were affected by racist assumptions that northern Europeans were 'a better type of migrant' and that southern Europeans were perhaps not quite 'white'. Departmental officials both reflected the culture of the society of which they were part, and because of their responsibility to manage the political acceptability of the immigration program, had to take it into consideration. Officials selecting immigrants from Mediterranean regions were given the task of picking the difference between 'colour' and suntan. One, selecting Greeks, used to refer doubtful cases to the medical officer who had them strip to see if they were dark all over.⁶⁵ This 'racial' consideration overrode political alignment during the war, as it applied as much to Greeks who supported the allied forces as to Italians who fought against them.

Greeks.

During the 1946-54 period, only 8,963 permanent settlers came from Greece.⁶⁶ Greek ex-servicemen led the protest against what they perceived to be discrimination against Greek immigration. In October 1948 the Greek Consul-General approached the Australian Government through Allan Fraser MP on behalf of Greek ex-servicemen, who argued unsuccessfully for the inclusion of Greece in the assisted passage agreements for ex-servicemen and their dependents, being negotiated by Australia with other allied nations.⁶⁷ In February 1949 a group of

⁶⁴ Minute to Minister, 19.11.1952, 194/1/9, CRS A445, AA. Report of visit 8-14.10.1953, 276/2/13, CRS A445, AA.

⁶⁵ Tom Stratton in *Angels and Arrogant Gods: Migration Officers and Migrants Reminisce 1945-85*, AGPS, Canberra, 1989, p.92.

⁶⁶ Charles Price, ed., *Greeks in Australia*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1975, p.24.

⁶⁷ E.C. Vrisakes to Allan Fraser MP, 18.10.1948, Calwell's reply 15.12.1948, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

Queensland Greek ex-servicemen who had served in the Australian forces during the war, appealed, again through their Consul General, for the right to nominate their relatives from Greece under the assisted passage scheme. They were told the scheme was not for ex-members of the Australian forces.⁶⁸

The announcement of the Government's intention to conclude migration agreements with Italy and the Netherlands in 1951 aroused further resentment among the Greek community in Australia. The Greek Consul in Melbourne informed the Secretary of the Department of Immigration in January 1951 that 'there is a strong undercurrent of resentment among the Greek Community that 20,000 Italians should be brought out here free of charge while no similar scheme operated in respect of Greeks'.⁶⁹

At this time there was considerable agitation among Greek workers in Rome, where there was a 22-28% unemployment rate, to migrate to Australia. Greek diplomatic representatives, clergy and the Greek branch of the Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSALIA) continued to make representations to the Department on behalf of the Greek community. The *Hellenic Herald* in Sydney complained the Greeks were being treated less favourably than they deserved, given the assistance they provide Australians during the war.⁷⁰

Objections to Greek immigration were not entirely based on racial prejudice. A 1952 Departmental assessment of Greece as a potential source of immigrants, which drew on Australian, American and International Labour Organisation (ILO) sources, advised that statistics of pre-war Greek emigration indicated a high rate of return. Emigration was seen by

⁶⁸ Christy Freeleagus, Consul General for Greece to W.P. Conelan, MP, 11.2.1949 and Calwell's reply 24.3.1949, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

⁶⁹ Eugene Gorman, Consul for Greece, to the Secretary of the Department of Immigration, 25.1.1951, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

⁷⁰ Report by A.N. Boyle, Immigration Attache, Rome to Secretary, Department of Immigration, 21.2.1951, Memorandum on the visit of a Greek delegation by Chief Migration Officer, South Australia, to Secretary 23.2.1951, Walter J. Cooper, Minister of Repatriation to H.Holt, Minister for Immigration forwarding cutting from the *Hellenic Herald* (Sydney), 14.5.1951, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

the ILO as a short-term solution to current economic problems in Greece, and integration problems were anticipated resulting from the current 27% illiteracy rate and the fact that 60% of the workforce was employed in largely small-scale farming. Of the 12,000 Greeks in Australia at the 1947 census, 4,500 were not naturalised, it observed. It advised that Australia was unlikely to be able to recruit from Greece the 'quantities and types' of skilled workers demanded by the Australian economy.⁷¹

Although no formal approach had been received from the Greek Government concerning the negotiation of an immigration agreement, the Minister for Immigration decided in November 1951 to appoint migration officers in Athens. In January 1952 the Consul-General for Greece in Australia requested an interview with the Minister to discuss the negotiation of an assisted immigration treaty.⁷²

These discussions were deferred until after the Minister, Harold Holt, had signed an agreement in August 1952 with the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants (PICMME, later the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM)) to accept 500 Greek migrants, selected by the Greek government according to agreed criteria (and 500 Austrians, mainly volksdeutsch). Australia bore only a fraction of the costs of the movements organised by this Committee.⁷³ An important reason for accepting this group of mostly single male rural workers from Greece was to deflect criticism that Australia was favouring ex-enemy nationals as against former allies.⁷⁴ The target intake for 1953-54 of Greeks under arrangements with ICEM was 2,000 however, they were greatly outnumbered by former enemy aliens (7,000 West Germans, 3,000 East Germans, and 750 Austrians).⁷⁵

⁷¹ Secretary to Minister, Notes on the Prospect of Greek Migration, 31.1.1952, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

⁷² E.C. Vrisakis, 7.1.1952, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

⁷³ Paper on the Immigration Program prepared by the Immigration Planning Council, 18.12.1953, 142/5/2, CRS A 445/1 AA.

⁷⁴ Cablegram from the Australian Consulate-General, Geneva, to the Acting Minister, Department of Immigration, 16.8.1952, 197/1/2, CRS A445, AA.

⁷⁵ Hugh Gibson, ICEM to Secretary, Department of Immigration, 6.11.1953, 118/1/9, CRS A445/1, AA.

Single women were excluded from this PICMME agreement as the Department of Immigration anticipated 'considerable difficulty' in placing 'single Greek girls with a rural background into suitable rural employment'. It soon discovered from the Commonwealth Employment Service that males were also difficult to place because of their lack of English and of the prevalence of discrimination in rural areas against Southern Europeans 'from the "colour" angle'. Employers did not accept Greeks readily, preferring Dutch and German rural workers.⁷⁶

In June 1953 the Secretary of the Department of Immigration sent to Mr Lambros, Minister of Greece, a draft migration agreement based largely on the migration agreements entered into with other countries. By this time Australia was looking to Greece to make up a substantial shortfall in Dutch migration, and an anticipated shortfall from Germany and Austria. They also wanted to attract Greek skilled as well as rural workers although non-recognition of Greek trade qualifications by Australian employers and trade unions was anticipated.⁷⁷

Greek women were now sought because of the reluctance of women from northern Europe to accept positions in Australia as domestics. They were required to be childless 'of good appearance and character', under 35, experienced as domestics, have some knowledge of English and to agree to accept placement in country districts with Australian families. Thus selection criteria for the only category of female worker acceptable to Australia from southern Europe were more rigorous than for male workers.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Minute R.H. Rowbridge to Assistant Secretary, 2.12.1952, R.F. Harris, Minute on Greek assisted migrants, 29.5.1953, 197/1/5, CRS A445, AA.

⁷⁷ Text of treaty, 187/1/2, CRS A445, AA, G.C. Watson, Minute to Secretary, 4.12.1953; Minute B.M. Martyn to Secretary 30.11.1953, 197/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

⁷⁸ Minute, G.C. Watson to First Assistant Secretary, 9.12.1953, A H Bland, Secretary Department of Labour and National Service (DLNS) to Secretary, Department of Immigration, 8.12.1953; Secretary, Department of Immigration, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 15.12.1953, 197/1/9, CRS A445, AA.

Italians and the restriction of sponsorship rights.

In August 1951 the Immigration Planning Council drew the government's attention to the large number of foreign migrants (30,000-35,000) arriving as full-fare passengers who could not be directed into employment. It recommended the imposition of restrictions on the numbers of dependents migrants could sponsor to Australia.⁷⁹ This was undertaken by the Department of Immigration the following year in a manner which discriminated against southern Europeans in favour of northern Europeans.

When it reviewed the statistics of permanent new arrivals in March 1952, the Department of Immigration became alarmed at the predominance of southern Europeans, particularly Italians, among unassisted immigrants. It believed that the rapid growth percentage of Italians admitted might create public apprehension that control had been lost over the program. A 'considerable portion of the Australian public is not favourably disposed towards (Italians)', the Secretary reported to the Minister, despite the fact that 'on the whole they have proved worthwhile settlers who are hardworking and law abiding and have made quite a respectable contribution to the development of our rural areas'.

Although to December 1951 Italians had formed only 7.2% of the total migrant intake since 1947, this was expected to escalate rapidly. In 1951 there were 25,302 unassisted Italians admitted on landing permits and of these 16,554 had been granted permanent residence. That year Italians comprised 28% of the total alien intake and the new agreement with the Italian government would bring in 20,000 more as assisted immigrants. As the displaced persons scheme had terminated and the numbers of British immigrants was declining, the Secretary warned the Minister in 1952 that:

Unless precautions are taken the flow of alien migrants could be overwhelmingly Italian and it could happen that they could

⁷⁹ Report of the joint meeting of the Sub-Committees of the Immigration Planning Council and the National Security Resources Board, Melbourne, 7.8.1951, 142/5/2, CRS A445/1, AA.

outnumber British migrants. This could lead to the creation of a situation which would not be in the best interests of the Australian community.⁸⁰

The Department saw Italians as having a 'penchant for community settlement and their greater resistance to assimilation than the general run of foreigners.' It therefore advised the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (IAC) on 4 April 1952 that it was essential 'to curtail the flow of Italian migration and generally ensure that those admitted are of a class which will be more readily assimilable'. It was the overriding principle of our immigration policy, it added, 'that nothing should be done to endanger the predominantly British constitution of our population, or which would tend to the creation of any considerable alien minority of a particular nationality'.

While the imposition of a literacy test and of stricter standards of selection by immigration officers in Italy were seen as partial solutions, the urgency of the problem prompted the creation of a special sub-committee of the IAC. The Department wanted neither to be perceived to be discriminating against Italians, nor to be forced apply the same restrictive criteria to Central or Northern Europeans as it did to southerners. It did not favour the introduction of a quota system based on the proportions of aliens in the existing Australian population, as this would favour southern Europeans over northern and could provide 'room for criticism by Asians on the ground of racial discrimination'.

The solution arrived at by the Department and the IAC subcommittee, was to introduce limitations on the type of person sponsored. Previously nominees could be close or distant relatives, or not related at all to their sponsor. In future all migrants would be prevented from sponsoring friends, and evidence of relationship would be required for other than close dependant relatives (wives, children and parents). Sponsors were required to be in permanent employment or in a position to support their nominee for at least 12 months. These rules were to be

⁸⁰ T.H.E. Heyes, to Minister, 27.3.1952. This paper estimated that 48% immigrants between October 1945 and December 1950 were British and approximately 36% were refugees, 140/5/14, CRS A 445/1, AA

strictly applied to southern Europeans but wide discretion could be used with northern and central Europeans. The Minister approved but recommended that exception should be made for nominations for rural areas and essential industries.

These discriminatory restrictions against the sponsorship of relatives by southern Europeans were only removed in July 1969 when, in the context of falling interest in migration to Australia in northern Europe, the wives and dependent children of any breadwinner who had come to Australia on an unassisted basis became eligible for assisted passages. This increased the proportion of southern Europeans receiving assisted passages from 24.5% between 1947-1969 to 53% between 1970 and 1983. All discrimination on the basis of nationality was eliminated with the adoption of a global non-discriminatory immigration policy in 1973.

Perceptions of discrimination against southern Europeans within the government and the administration, acted not only as a psychological deterrent to their integration, it also handicapped their settlement in very practical ways. Although Australia signed an immigration agreement with Italy in March 1951 and with Greece in 1953, only 16.6% of Italians and 33.4% of Greeks and Cypriots who arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1973 were assisted. This meant that the great majority of southern Europeans did not receive the initial settlement assistance provided by the government to British migrants, 86.5% of whom were assisted, or to the Germans, 75.3% of whom received aid.

The 'Citizenship Bargain' with Assisted Aliens

Under the migration agreements reached with relinquishing countries the Australian Government agreed to accept immigrants as temporary residents for two years, after which they were entitled to apply for permanent residence.

As permanent residents their choice of employment and residence would still be subject to 'such restrictions as the Commonwealth

As permanent residents their choice of employment and residence would still be subject to 'such restrictions as the Commonwealth Government may impose upon aliens generally on grounds of national security or public order' ⁸¹

This clause was in part a reference to the *Aliens Act 1947* which, from 1 January 1948, obliged all aliens 16 and over to register on arrival in the country and notify the Department of Immigration of any change in their address or occupation. It also forbade them from changing their surname without the written consent of the Minister for Immigration. Separate lists of aliens were kept by the Commonwealth by the Department of Immigration and by each State. State indexes were kept alphabetically and by nationality, occupations and locality (which coincided with the Federal electorates). The hope was that these indexes would provide readily accessible information enabling the government to monitor 'the flow of aliens to any area and to watch how they are being absorbed.'⁸² Reports from Departmental social workers in the 1950s, however, indicate that compliance with this Act relied largely upon the voluntary cooperation of the alien, was not effectively monitored, that the lists were difficult to use and almost impossible to keep up to date ⁸³ The limitation could also be understood to refer to the legislative restrictions on the employment of aliens by the Commonwealth, which restricted the integration of aliens into certain sections of the workforce.

Immigrants arriving under negotiated agreements could be deported within five years of arrival if they contravened the provisions of the *Immigration Act*, or with two years of arrival if they proved unsuitable for settlement. If they decided to leave within the two year period they were liable to repay the amount both the Australian Government and their

⁸¹ Information in this section dealing with conditions under which assisted immigrants entered Australia is derived from the draft agreement between Australia and Greece, which, the Secretary of the Department of Immigration informed Dimitri N. Lambros, Minister for Greece on 19.6.1953, was based largely on other migration agreements, 197/1/2 ,CRS A445, AA.

⁸² CPD, HR, 26 November 1947, p.2927.

⁸³ For example report by Ray Vincent, Senior Social Worker, Western Australia. 20.7.1956, 276/2/13, CRS A445, AA.

own government had contributed to their passage. They were obliged to sign an agreement (provided in translation) to this effect.

This condition was never effectively monitored by the Department of Immigration until September 1971, when increased screening at exits resulted in a considerable number of assisted migrants being detected leaving the country without meeting this obligation. The Department estimated in 1973 that 'many thousands' had probably left Australia in this way. The obligation had never been contested in a court of law and a Departmental officer advised that it would be unwise to do so as the countries of which such defaulters were nationals could protest against restrictions on the freedom of movement of their subjects. An unfavourable judgement, he warned, could lead to more widespread abuse of the immigration program by 'adventurers and tourists'. Only token attempts at debt recovery had been made prior to September 1971, he observed.⁸⁴ The form also obtained the immigrant's agreement to 'use every endeavour to learn the English language' by attending regularly the Government's free night classes. This was also unenforceable.

Under these negotiated agreements the Australian Government agreed to meet the transport costs of immigrants within Australia, and also the costs of transporting their household effects, which were sent free of charge by the ship on which they travelled. It also agreed to accommodate them temporarily at a reception centre during the period they were awaiting employment, without cost for seven days if necessary. On the eighth day they became eligible for unemployment or special social service benefits, and their accommodation fees and those of their dependents were deducted from these benefits until the migrant found employment.

While the Government did not guarantee to find employment for assisted migrants, the services of the Commonwealth Employment Service were provided to help them find jobs at rates and conditions not inferior to those offered to Australian workers. It also agreed to provide them with information on the rates and conditions applicable to the employment they

⁸⁴ T.T. McElroy, Director, Finance Section, to Secretary, January 1973; Minute, P.M. Rice to T.T. McElroy, 16.1.1973, 75/78785, CRS A 446 T31, AA.

found (although the agreement made no mention of providing this information in translation). Employed migrants who could not find private accommodation for their families could have their dependents housed at their expense in holding centres as near as possible to their place of employment.

Assisted migrants entering under government to government agreements were entitled to 'after-care' to assist them in 'solving any assimilation problems', provided by the Department of Immigration and 'associated voluntary welfare and after-care organisations'. Both contracting governments agreed to facilitate the transfer of 'reasonable funds' by the immigrant between their countries.

These government-to-government agreements the only place where the rights and obligations of assisted immigrants were spelt out. It was, however, a very inadequate form of 'bargain'. The only two obligations to which the immigrant individually gave his or her consent — to repay transport costs and to learn English — were either not enforced or were unenforceable and, the clauses dealing with the social and civil status of aliens glossed over a wide range of discriminatory provisions which restricted their rights and hindered their ability to integrate. As information on their rights and responsibilities was not in the early years of the program, supplied to aliens in translation, their ability to comply with Commonwealth and State legislation and policies was extremely limited.

Postscript — towards an Adequate Citizenship Bargain

By the early 1960s the Department of Immigration began to abandon the universalist assumption that migrants should not be treated differently from the rest of the community. It began to consider seriously the problems and suggested solutions presented to it by its own social workers and non-government migrant welfare bodies, and it commenced actively to address the causes of migrant disadvantage.

In 1963 it began to look at the large category of aliens unable to integrate because they lacked language skills. This was the first step in a slow process which resulted in the establishment of an innovative nationwide telephone interpreter service, a professional accreditation program for interpreters, the provision of multi-lingual welfare workers and of information in translation by government departments.

By the 1960s the earlier assumption within the administration that migrants' problems were those of individuals had passed, and group solutions for particular categories of disadvantage were being tackled. This is particularly evident in the Government Members' Immigration Committee's 1967 review of the *Citizenship Act*, (which addressed the obstacles to attaining citizenship presented by the Act to aliens with intellectual disabilities, or who could not meet the language requirement because of speech or hearing impairment, or age). It also sought a structure to address the problems of professional migrants in having their skills recognised.⁸⁵

In 1972 the Department of Immigration surveyed the range of Commonwealth and State legislation which discriminated against aliens. Much of this legislation preventing aliens from being employed in a wide variety of occupations⁸⁶ was amended in subsequent years in the context of the growing voting power of former aliens who gained full citizenship rights, the development of ethnic organisations with State and Federal structures, and of Australia's participation in international agreements .

The urgency of the need to understand and remove systemic obstacles to alien integration became evident from the 1973 enquiry into migrant departures — the ultimate form of non-compliance with the requirement to integrate. It was found that since 1966 an annual average of 37,000 immigrants had left Australia, most of them permanently. Australia was losing 22% of its immigrants after 6 years in the country and 28% after 10 years. The greatest proportional losses over the period

⁸⁵ Richard Cleaver, Chairman, Government Members' Immigration Committee to the Minister for Immigration, B.M. Snedden, 6.11.1967, 67/72349, CRS A446/78, AA.

⁸⁶ Summary of known discriminatory legislation N D (C 1973), 75/78542, CRS A446 T31, AA.

1947-73 were of aliens — German, Dutch, Italian and Greek migrants. Assisted migrants were leaving at a slightly higher rate than were unassisted and the greatest loss was of skilled and professional migrants.⁸⁷

The effects of discriminatory legislation and administrative arrangements became clear from the findings of the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in 1975, which found that 18,000 (12.3%) of alien migrants who had arrived in Australia since 1966 had incomes below the poverty line, and almost twice as many migrant income units would have been in poverty had the wife not been working. Recently arrived migrants represented 6.9% of those below the poverty line in Australia.⁸⁸

Since 1945 Australia has successfully integrated large intakes of non-English speaking immigrants from a wide range of cultures. That this has occurred without violence or major social disturbances is attributable in large part to the government's ability to tailor the intake of immigrants to meet prevailing economic needs, to a bi-partisan commitment to a policy of integration, to the construction and maintenance of mainstream political support for the program, to the development of strategies which facilitated immigrant compliance with Australian laws and regulations, and to the removal of systemic obstacles and discriminatory legislation and administrative practices which prevented or discouraged their compliance.

⁸⁷ Immigration Advisory Council Committee on Social Patterns, *Inquiry into the Departure of Settlers from Australia*, final report July 1973, AGPS, Canberra, 1973, pp.3-6, *Population and Australia. A Demographic Analysis and Projection*, (Chairman W.D. Borrie), v.1, AGPS, Canberra, 1975, p.124.

⁸⁸ *Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty*, First main Report, April 1975, v.1 (Chairman Professor Ronald F. Henderson), AGPS, Canberra, 1975, pp.269-70.

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