The National Museum of Australia seeks to tell Australia’s story.

One of the most significant aspects of Australia’s history is immigration and the story of the impacts of newcomers on the existing Australian society. Most of the National Museum of Australia’s objects and displays relating specifically to immigration are in the Museum’s Horizons Gallery, though there is evidence about the theme in each of the other galleries.

How can the objects and displays in the National Museum of Australia help us to understand the impacts of immigration?

A ‘mystery object’
Look at this ‘mystery object’ – it is on display in the Horizons Gallery, and has something to do with the story of immigration in Australia. See if you can decide what the object is, and what it might have to do with immigration.

Here are some questions to ask of the object that might help you make a decision:
• How would you describe it?
• What is it made from?
• What is its size?
• Is it like anything you are familiar with?
• How might it work?
You will be able to check your answers later in this unit.

Exploring the stories
In the following pages you will find some of the objects on display in the Horizons Gallery of the National Museum of Australia, starting with some stories of people, and then organised around a number of different themes relating to immigration that the stories raise: Immigration and . . .

➤ a White Australia – who should be encouraged to come to Australia? Who would be refused, and why?
➤ national identity and citizenship – what are the elements that make up an Australian identity?
➤ the ‘populate or perish’ philosophy – what is Australia’s optimum population size?
➤ the economy – what are economic activities that immigrants undertake, and what are their impact on others?
➤ the environment – what changes to the environment does immigration cause?

You could divide into groups, with each group choosing one of the themes, and being responsible for presenting a report on it to the whole class.

The National Museum of Australia opened in March 2001 as part of the celebrations for the Centenary of Federation. The museum employs a fresh and exciting approach to Australian history, culture and environment.

Each National Museum unit of work asks students to consider the stories and concepts behind museum themes, objects and images and is ideal for students of SOSE, History, Geography, English and Media Studies.
Immigration and
some people’s stories

1. Look at these stories and decide:
   • what aspects of Australia’s immigration story each tells us;
   • what major impacts they suggest immigration might have had.

For example. You may decide that the story of the Lê Thành Nhón tells us something about Australia as a refuge for persecuted and endangered people; and that this experience raises issues about the economic impacts of refugees on the nation, and their impacts on social attitudes through cultural diversity.

Use the table on page 3 to summarise your ideas.

Lê Thành Nhón
Lê Thành Nhón fled Vietnam in 1975, leaving behind many years of artistic achievement. He took jobs as a spray painter and tram conductor in Melbourne. Eventually he returned to his art. Lê’s life has turned full circle. To use his own words, he sculpts the sorrow of broken lives.

Quang Tart
Mei Quong Tart from Canton never missed an opportunity – and there were plenty on the New South Wales goldfields of the 1850s where he grew up. He lived with Scottish settlers, adopted their customs, and spoke English with a Scottish accent. By the 1890s he was a prominent business figure in Sydney and widely respected in the colony.

Barbara Porritt
Australia celebrated the arrival of the millionth postwar migrant, Barbara Porritt, a 21-year-old who came from England to Australia in 1955. A newlywed, she represented youth, beauty and promise for the future.

Mrs Freer
Mrs Freer was an Englishwoman who had left her husband in South Africa for another man in 1936. When they attempted to come to Australia Mrs Freer was tested in Italian (a language she did not speak) to make sure she failed, and could be refused entry because of what was seen as the immorality of her behaviour.

Juanita
As a seventeen year old student activist Juanita was ‘politely’ asked to leave Chile by the new military government in 1973. Faced with the choice of a trial and certain imprisonment or leaving her home, she moved to Argentina, but following a military coup in that country in 1976, finally moved to Australia as a refugee.

William Rodier
William Rodier was a pastoralist in the 1890s and the early part of the twentieth century. He was not an immigrant, but devoted his life to fighting that First Fleet immigrant, the rabbit. Rodier self-published booklets, posters and pamphlets giving advice about how to control rabbits. His main theory was that if you killed only females, the males would kill themselves fighting over the few remaining females, and all would soon die out.

Vincenzo Dublé
Vincenzo Dublé continued a family tradition by training as a barber. In his homeland of Sicily, barbers also acted as dentists and surgeons. Economic depression in the early 1930s led Dublé and friends to migrate to Australia, where he hoped to establish a business before bringing out his wife and children to join him.
2. Look at this summary of the seven biographies, and the major themes set out at the start of this unit. Decide which lives seem to be most associated with which themes. One example has been done to help you.

3. If you ONLY had these seven short biographies as evidence, what conclusions might you draw about immigration and Australia?

4. List any major questions that you would want to know more about.

In small groups, now look at one of the following explorations of some of the themes raised by these stories through some of the objects and displays in the Horizons Gallery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person/story</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lê Thàn Nhòn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Porritt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juanita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vincenzo Dublé</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Rodier</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Immigration and

a ‘White Australia’

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Immigration often involves social attitudes and values – that is, things which the people of a nation see as important to them. One which has been a significant part of Australian history has been our attitudes to ‘White Australia’ – the policy adopted by the new nation in 1901 to exclude non-European immigration from Australia. That policy was a significant part of Australia’s early national history, but has now been totally overturned as Australians saw the justice and benefits of a non-discriminatory immigration policy based on multiculturalism and cultural diversity.

Brainstorm

1 As a group, list the main ideas and information you have about the ‘White Australia Policy’ – such as:
   • what it meant,
   • when it was introduced,
   • against whom it was directed, and
   • what its impacts were.
   You will be able to ‘test’ these at the end of your study of the material which follows.

Analysing exhibits

Look at these exhibits. They are exhibits in the Horizons Gallery of the National Museum of Australia, and all have something to do with the White Australia Policy. (You can see these exhibits in colour by going to the National Museum of Australia web site www.nma.gov.au.

Click Education Resources, then Classroom Resources, then STUDIES Magazine, and finally Exploring the story of immigration in the National Museum of Australia’s Horizons Gallery.)

2 Working individually or in a group, decide for each exhibit:
   • what it is,
   • who is connected with it, or whose voice it represents,
   • what it is telling us, and
   • why it would be considered an appropriate object for a museum.

All eyes on Australia

This cartoon appeared in 1921 in the ‘Millions Magazine’, published by a club whose belief that Australia must ‘populate or perish’, and that the appropriate people to come to Australia were British.

Certificate of exemption from the Dictation Test

The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 was one of the very first Acts of the new Commonwealth Parliament. It severely restricted the immigration of non-Europeans to Australia, by having a dictation test that could be given. On the surface this looks like an education test rather than a racial test, but it was generally only given to Asian immigrants – usually in English, which they were unable to speak. Those Asians who were residents of Australia in 1901 were issued with Exemption Certificates from the test if they wanted to travel overseas and then return to Australia within a set period.
Creating a display

3 Now cut these images out and organise them in a way that tells a story about the ‘White Australia Policy’ in our history. Add captions / explanation panels to briefly summarise this story. You may decide that a particular aspect of the story has not been well covered by these exhibits, and that a new one that would cover that aspect should be added. If so, you can nominate what the exhibit might be that would convey this aspect of the story to viewers.

Some further ideas

Here are some aspects of immigration and social attitudes and values that you might take into account in creating your own story based on the display.

People’s social attitudes and values relating to immigration:

➤ may reflect the major concerns and ideas of the time;
➤ can change over time;
➤ can reflect a variety of motivations – selfishness, ignorance, compassion, fear, hope, etc.;
➤ may differ – there are often individuals and groups who do not accept government policies.

Good Neighbour Council

Good Neighbour Councils were formed in Australia after the end of World War 2 to provide support for immigrants, and to help them integrate into the local community.

Hot air cabinet

It was believed by many for a long time that ‘white men’ could not work in the tropics. This hot air cabinet was used to carry out tests on the reactions of people to exposure to tropical heat and humidity, so that governments would know which people were able to live and work in tropical conditions.

‘Sink them!’ poster

In 1995 the anti Asian immigration group National Action reacted to the arrival of several refugee boats from China.
Citizenship and National Identity

One significant area of immigration is its impact in civic matters, and especially the sense of identity of the nation. Does immigration ‘dilute’ national identity? Do the new migrants identify with and commit themselves to the new country? What happens if there are divided loyalties? These are all valid questions to explore.

Brainstorm

1. As a group, list the main ideas and information you have about immigration and national identity/citizenship—such as:
   • who become citizens,
   • what happens to their original citizenship, and
   • what their attitude is to the new nation.

You will be able to ‘test’ these at the end of your study of the material which follows.

Analysing exhibits

Look at these exhibits. They are exhibits in the Horizons Gallery of the National Museum of Australia, and all have something to do with citizenship and national identity. You can see these exhibits in colour by going to the National Museum of Australia web site www.nma.gov.au.

Passports

Australian passports are issued to people who are born in the nation, or who take out citizenship of it. Before 1948 Australians were called ‘British citizens’. The Australian Citizenship Act 1948 changed that to ‘Australian citizens’.

Creating a display

2. Individually or in a group, for each, decide:
   • what it is,
   • who is connected with it, or whose voice it represents,
   • what it is telling us, and
   • why it would be considered an appropriate object for a museum.

3. Now cut these images out and organise them in a way that tells a story about immigration and citizenship in our history. Add captions/explanation panels to briefly summarise this story. You may decide that a particular aspect of the story has not been well covered by these exhibits, and that a new one that would cover that aspect should be added. If so, you can nominate what the exhibit might be that would convey this aspect of the story to viewers.

Some further ideas

Here are some aspects of immigration and citizenship and national identity that you might take into account in creating your own story based on the display.

Immigrants may:

• adopt and commit themselves to the values and culture of the new country completely;
• adopt many of the new country’s values, but maintain aspects of their heritage from their previous country;
• completely maintain their old values and culture;
• add to the richness and complexity and diversity of the new culture;
• be influenced by the new country’s culture, and be changed themselves.
One major aspect of immigration is its impact on economic matters. The new immigrants are both producers and consumers — through jobs, social services, consumer goods, savings, taxation, and all the economic activities that other Australians are involved in. There may be some unique economic activities — such as through the use of interpreters — but in most cases immigrants are very similar in their economic activities to other Australians.

**Brainstorm**

1. As a group, list the main ideas and information you have about immigrants and the economy such as their impacts on:
   - jobs,
   - employable skills,
   - social services, and
   - businesses.

You will be able to ‘test’ these at the end of your study of the material which follows.

**Analysing exhibits**

Look at these exhibits. They are exhibits in the Horizons Gallery of the National Museum of Australia, and all have something to do with the White Australia Policy. You can see these exhibits in colour by going to the National Museum of Australia website www.nma.gov.au. Click Education Resources, then Classroom Resources, then STUDIES Magazine, and finally Exploring the story of immigration in the National Museum of Australia’s Horizons Gallery.)

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   - what it is telling us, and
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**Creating a display**

3. Now cut these images out and organise them in a way that tells a story about immigration and the economy in our history. Add captions / explanation panels to briefly summarise this story. You may decide that a particular aspect of the story has not been well covered by these exhibits, and that a new one that would cover that aspect should be added. If so, you can nominate what the exhibit might be that would convey this aspect of the story to viewers.

**Some further ideas**

Here are some aspects of immigration and economic matters that you might take into account in creating your own story based on the display.

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**Barber’s tools**

These barbers’ instruments were brought to Australia by Vincenzo Dublé when he emigrated from Italy.

Some were not appropriate to the way of life of the new country, but he used the others to create a career for himself that lasted many decades.

**Quong Tart**

Quong Tart was a Sydney merchant. Around 1900, when this photograph was taken, he was planning to make all his employees shareholders in his company. He paid his workers meal allowances and holiday and sick pay.

**Chart of immigration and government expenditure**

Immigration to Australia is organised into several categories — such as family reunion, skilled and business, and refugees.

This chart from the Australia 2030 interactive CD ROM display shows the results of a study of immigration into the impacts of each category of immigrant on government expenditure and income over five years.

The economic implications of immigration may be:
- positive for the nation in some ways;
- negative for the nation in some ways;
- that immigrants need to adapt their existing skills;
- that opportunities are given for individuals’ improvement;
- that injustices are done in relation to not acknowledging the newcomers’ abilities and skills.
Look at these exhibits, each of which has something to do with attitudes to Australia’s optimum population size and type.

**Brainstorm**

1. As a group, list the main ideas and information you have about immigration and population—such as:
   - how many immigrants arrive each year,
   - where they go,
   - how they live,
   - what impacts they have on total population numbers,
   - whether Australia needs more or fewer immigrants.

You will be able to ‘test’ these at the end of your study of the material which follows.

**Analysing exhibits**

Look at these exhibits. They are exhibits in the Horizons Gallery of the National Museum of Australia, and all have something to do with attitudes to population size and type in Australia, popular attitudes to population futures, and government policies and controls on immigration. You can see these exhibits in colour by going to the National Museum of Australia web site [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au). Click Education Resources, then Classroom Resources, then STUDIES Magazine, and finally Exploring the story of immigration in the National Museum of Australia’s Horizons Gallery.

2. Individually or in a group, for each, decide:
   - what it is,
   - who is connected with it, or whose voice it represents,
   - what it is telling us, and
   - why it would be considered an appropriate object for a museum.

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**Millions club**

Early in the century patriotic associations pointed to Australia’s vulnerability and promoted schemes for populating and developing the north. Formed by New South Wales businessmen in 1912, the Million Club (later the Millions Club) sought a million more immigrants from the United Kingdom.

**Save our mothers**

During the Great Depression of 1929–1933, Australia’s birthrate slumped and more people left the country than came here to settle. In 1937 ex-Prime Minister Billy Hughes campaigned to improve the health of mothers and increase the birthrate.
Creating a display

Now cut these images out and organise them in a way that tells a story about immigration and population numbers and type in our history. Add captions / explanation panels to briefly summarise this story. You may decide that a particular aspect of the story has not been well covered by these exhibits, and that a new one that would cover that aspect should be added. If so, you can nominate what the exhibit might be that would convey this aspect of the story to viewers.

Some further ideas

Here are some aspects of immigration and population that you might take into account in creating your own story based on the display.

People’s attitudes to population may:
- reflect certain values;
- want to promote one group over another;
- be changed over time;
- reflect what they think is best for the nation;
- take into account a range of factors – social, defence, humanitarian, economic.

Government welcomes

Since 1901, when immigration became a Commonwealth matter, governments have encouraged migration to Australia. Modern governments plan the program carefully in terms of numbers, though our immigration policies do not involve ethnicity or religion in their implementation.

Hong Hai wheel

Australia had provided troops to South Vietnam in its war with North Vietnam from 1962 until 1972. With the defeat of the South Vietnamese Government in 1975 many South Vietnamese fled the country, fearing persecution by the victors. Many finally made their way to Australia after dangerous sea journeys in leaking boats through pirate-infested waters. The first to arrive in Darwin Harbour was the Hong Hai.

Charles Loaney headstone, fumigation tank and rifle

Australia has no land borders with any other country. The only ways to enter Australia are by air or sea. From Federation in 1901 quarantine was a commonwealth, or national, matter. These exhibits are all from Christmas Island, and show a readiness to use force to prevent violation of Australia’s borders, the need to protect Australia against exotic diseases and germs through temporary quarantine (sometimes made permanent through death), or fumigation.
Immigration and the environment

Background Briefing

'Immigration' does not only refer to people. One of the impacts of immigration may be the introduction of non-indigenous species into the environment – with subsequent impacts, both beneficial and harmful.

Look at one of these introduced species, the rabbit, and see what we can learn about it from the museum.

Brainstorm

1 As a group, list the main ideas and information you have about introduced species and the environment – such as:
- what has been introduced,
- when they were introduced,
- what their positive impacts have been,
- what their negative impacts have been, and
- how they have changed or shaped the land and the way people live.

You will be able to ‘test’ these at the end of your study of the material which follows.

Analysing exhibits

Look at these exhibits. They are exhibits in the Horizons Gallery of the National Museum of Australia, and all have something to do with attitudes to population size and type in Australia, popular attitudes to population futures, and government policies and controls on immigration. You can see these exhibits in colour by going to the National Museum of Australia website www.nma.gov.au.

Click Education Resources, then Classroom Resources, then STUDIES Magazine, and finally Exploring the story of immigration in the National Museum of Australia’s Horizons Gallery.)

2 Individually or in a group, consider these questions for each:
- what it is,
- who is connected with it, or whose voice it represents,
- what it is telling us, and
- why it would be considered an appropriate object for a museum.

Men’s hat

This is a typical hat worn by most Australian men in the period 1920s to 1950s. It is a fur felt hat, made from rabbit skin. Look at almost any photograph of Australian men in that period, and you will see such hats as a part of standard daily dress.

Grey rabbit ‘spread’

Domestic rabbits had been brought to Australia, on the First Fleet in fact, but they did not survive in the wild. This map shows the spread of the different breed, the grey rabbit, in Australia from the time of its first release into the wild from a farm near Geelong, Victoria, in 1859.

Rabbits in transit

Rabbit trappers supplied factories with skins, and butcher shops, markets and hawkers with meat. By the late 1940s Australia exported almost 50 million rabbit carcasses annually.
Creating a display

Now cut these images out and organise them in a way that tells a story about the rabbit in our history. Add captions/explanation panels to briefly summarise this story. You may decide that a particular aspect of the story has not been well covered by these exhibits, and that a new one that would cover that aspect should be added. If so, you can nominate what the exhibit might be that would convey this aspect of the story to viewers.

Some further ideas

Here are some aspects of immigration and the environment that you might take into account in creating your own story based on the display.

Introduced species may:
- compete with indigenous ones for resources;
- not be compatible with the environment;
- create new economic benefits;
- influence social behaviour and traditions.
Concluding exercise
exploring your own community

One excellent way of exploring the impacts of immigration on Australia in a manageable way is to focus on your own community, and to create a display of objects that tell the story of immigration and that community.

1. Have each person in your class bring one object which says something about immigration and their family or local community.

2. Have each person tell the story behind that object to the whole class. You could draw on some of the ideas explored above to help you make sense of the meanings and implications — social, cultural, economic, political — of the objects.

3. Write a caption for somebody else's object.

4. Organise a display of these objects and the captions in a way that tells the story of your class and local community. You might organise this into one narrative, or into themes, or in some other way that suits the information you get from people's contributions.

5. Investigate your community further, to fill in any gaps or to test further the ideas and conclusions that your class collection has tentatively raised.

Some aspects to consider might be:

People – and their social, economic, cultural impacts

Which countries have people in my community come from? When? Why? Have there been any changes over time in patterns of migration? How were they accepted on arrival? How have they changed the place? How has the place changed them? What have they contributed from their migration? What have they received? What problems have they faced? What support have they received? Have they been discriminated against?

Places – the distribution of people, and their activities

Where have people settled? Have there been any patterns? Have these changed over time? Have there been impacts on the environment?

Built environment – the evidence around us

Is there evidence of the impacts of immigration in the built environment — such as in building styles, garden plants, names on memorials, street or place names, types of businesses, ways of doing things?

6. Imagine that you have been asked to design a memorial, flag, plaque or poster, to commemorate and celebrate the influence of migration on your community. Prepare a sketch or outline of that commemorative design.

The National Museum of Australia is interested in hearing from you with your investigations. Contact the Education Section on (02) 6208 5119
Or send your findings to
School Section
National Museum of Australia
PO Box 1901
Canberra ACT 2601
www.nma.gov.au

For more information
Some excellent starting points for exploring immigration in Australia in more detail are:

✈ Australia 2030 – Investigating the FACTS of Immigration, a multimedia kit from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs that has been sent to every secondary school in Australia
✈ The special youth website associated with this Australia 2030 kit, at www.australia2030.gov.au
✈ Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs website www.immi.gov.au
✈ Australia's Cultural Network, a portal into the collections of Australia's major cultural institutions, at www.can.gov.au