From across the sea
Australia’s national migration story
Australia’s First Peoples

The Gadigal people of the Eora Nation are the traditional custodians of the bamal (earth) and badu (waters) on which the Australian National Maritime Museum is located.

The Australian National Maritime Museum acknowledges all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional custodians throughout Australia - and pays respect to them and their cultures.
Message from Kevin Sumption, PSM
Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum

This e-booklet provides an overview of the Australian National Maritime Museum’s achievements in sharing the national migration story. It was designed as a presentation and accompanies a compilation of stories of migrants to Australia from Signals, our quarterly journal.

The story of migration to Australia is not only a fundamental theme in our maritime history, it is a foundation narrative of modern Australia. Since 1945 nearly eight million migrants have stepped ashore to infuse modern Australia with more than 200 different cultural and linguistic traditions.

Migrants have contributed enormously to the making of modern Australia and it is my belief that museums sharing their stories can increase our understanding of the unique challenges many migrants face.

Mass migrations have occurred throughout human history and have transformed nearly every culture on our planet. But today the pace and magnitude of migration are unprecedented, and borne out in the changing economic, cultural, societal and political character of many of our own states, cities and regional towns. Nearly half of all Australians were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas.

In an age where museums are no longer just repositories of historical and artistic treasures, but function as societal agents for change, it is not surprising that many new migration museums have sprung up in the last ten years, particularly across Europe. Museums with powerful new remits have embraced the challenge of explaining the unprecedented changes taking place in communities around the world today. However, in Australia we are yet to debate either the need for or function of such a national institution.

The Australian National Maritime Museum is responsible for collecting and exhibiting the national migration story. We welcome our leadership responsibility in this area and acknowledge that many other museums also deal with migration. While our museum’s achievements are commendable, I consider it is timely for stronger national storytelling about migration to build social inclusion and community harmony and help combat racism and, in particular, Islamophobia. Since 2017, enhancing the telling of Australia’s migration story has been a priority under our Corporate Plan and we are diligently working on several fronts to realise this. We have ambitious plans and look forward to working with, government and corporate partners and, most importantly, with migrant communities to bring them to fruition.

April 2019
Sharing the national migration story

The Australian National Maritime Museum, which opened in 1991, is located in Darling Harbour, Sydney, close to where many migrants to Australia disembarked.

The museum is a national cultural institution within the federal Arts Portfolio. We have a statutory responsibility for the National Maritime Collection and the custodianship, exhibition and dissemination of information about objects in it. This includes objects that are in the museum’s national migration collection, and stories, exhibitions and programs about migration.

We are more than a museum, we create encounters and experiences that change people’s understanding of Australia. The 10 million migrants – those who have come from across the seas to settle in Australia – are central to understanding our nation.

This presentation provides an overview of the museum’s achievements in sharing the national migration story as at 30 June 2018.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- 17.8 million visitors to ANMM since 1991
- National migration collection (14,450 objects) + oral histories (n=50)
- Permanent Passengers Gallery + Tu Do (Vietnamese refugee vessel)
- 29 temporary exhibitions on migration, including touring exhibitions
- Two digital projections (Waves of Migration; Threads of Migration) viewed by over 260,000 people
- Digital blogs, online exhibitions and Google Cultural Institute
- Migration education portal and curriculum-aligned education programs and public programs
- 30,000 registrants on the Welcome Wall; 50,000 participants at unveiling ceremonies
- Active in migration scholarship and partnerships
- Diverse workforce speaking more than 15 languages.
The core of our permanent exhibition on migration is:

- **Passengers**, the museum’s migration gallery illustrated below.

- The Vietnamese fishing vessel *Tu Do*, left, which is berthed at the museum. *Tu Do* made landfall in Darwin on 21 November 1977 carrying 31 Vietnamese refugees.

Permanent exhibitions
260,000 people have seen the *Waves of Migration* animated digital artwork (top left), projected on the museum’s rooftop, since its launch on Australia Day 2013. As at 30 June 2018, it had screened for a total of 117 days.

*Waves* is an award-winning and thought-provoking eight-minute artwork following the journeys of boats across oceans and cultures and through the passage of time. Projected onto the museum’s rooftop, it depicts a captivating array of personal stories: from British convicts and early settlers, to Jewish refugees and displaced persons from war-torn Europe, Ten-Pound Poms, Vietnamese boat people and seaborne asylum seekers from Afghanistan.

It won an American Alliance of Museums Media and Technology MUSE Award for Public Outreach in 2013.

*Threads of Migration* (bottom left) was launched in 2019.
Temporary exhibitions

- 29 migration-themed temporary exhibitions on site, including two rooftop projections

- Six migration-themed touring exhibitions in Australia (NSW, VIC, SA, WA, TAS, ACT, NT) and one in the United Kingdom

- Our exhibitions have had a diverse focus including multiple migrant groups, refugees and people who are born Jewish, Greek, Vietnamese, Chinese, Chilean, Italian, Portuguese, Croatian, Dutch, Pacific, British or Norwegian.
This exhibition explored the eras and the human experiences of migration. A major component of the 1998 Olympic Arts Festival. Winner of the Multicultural Marketing Grand Award & National Government Category Award, it attracted 135,000 visitors.

This exhibition highlighted the strong maritime culture that Greek immigrants have brought to Australia, and their role in forming our national identity. It was supported by First Greek–Australian Museum Foundation, various individual supporters and Visions Australia. It attracted 308,242 visitors - 129,011 onsite + 179,231 on tour to Newcastle, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin.
On their own: Britain’s Child Migrants

- The exhibition explores the story of more than 100,000 British children who were sent to Australia and other Commonwealth countries through child migration schemes from the 1860s until the 1970s.

- It was exhibited onsite from November 2010 to May 2011 and from February to April 2014. It toured to 6 venues in Australia and 2 in the UK between June 2011 and June 2016. Touring was supported by the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs.

- Most popular exhibition in the museum’s history – seen by more than 850,000 people over six years. Also, the most visited exhibition in the history of the Immigration Museum (Melbourne) and second-highest in the history of the V&A Museum of Childhood (London).

- Winner of the Museums & Galleries NSW IMAGinE Award for Exhibitions and Public Engagement in 2011.

- Research legacy includes an international conference in the UK and citations in nearly 20 academic and popular publications in Australia and overseas. Inspired several doctoral and masters’ projects in history, museum studies, fine arts and film.
Remembering Skaubryn

The Norwegian liner Skaubryn was the only vessel lost at sea during the era of post-war migration to Australia, when it caught fire and sank in the Indian Ocean in 1958.

A 2018 photographic exhibition called Remembering Skaubryn captured the dramatic fire and rescue on the 60th anniversary of the disaster.
Our temporary exhibitions related to migrants and culture

• We came on luggage racks
• The Dunera Boys – we’re here because we’re here – Austrian and Jewish refugees
• Sea the World
• Artesanias de Chile
• Thalassa – Greek Australians and the Sea*
• Tears, Fears & Cheers
• From Hell to Hope – 50th anniversary of arrival of first Holocaust survivors
• Vietnamese Voyages
• On the tide
• Views of the Pearl River Delta – Macau, Canton & Hong Kong
• Stitches – Fare il Punto
• Siglas de Pescadores – Signs of Fishermen*
• Food for Thought – Refugee art project
• Refugee Women – Heroines and Survivors of War
• Gina’s Journey – From Istria to Australia
• Dutch connections – 400 years of Australian–Dutch maritime links 1606–2006
• Displaced persons
• Intertwined Journeys – Tu Do & the Lu Family
• On Their Own: Britain’s Child Migrants*
• Escape from Vietnam*
• X for unknown – SIEV X Memorial designs
• P&O – Celebrating 175 years
• Waves of Migration
• Coming to Australia*
• Year of the Rooster – Chinese maritime traditions
• Remembering Skaubryn
• Threads of Migration
• Welcome Wall/Coming to Australia flat pack*

* also toured
Engaging the community through multicultural food festivals

- Mediterranean Tucker Festival – 12,500 visitors
- Snapper, Spice and Rice – South-East Asian Seafare Festival – 10,180 visitors
- Pacific on a Plate Food Festival – 13,640 visitors
Highlights of our National Refugee Week initiatives

• Our first migration themed temporary exhibition, *We came on luggage racks* (in conjunction with Austcare).
• *Food for thought – Refugee Art Project* exhibition. In partnership with Austcare, the museum asked New South Wales students to design a poster or mural exploring global refugee issues.
• Special refugee-themed *Welcome Wall* unveiling.
• *Coming to Australia* exhibition marked National Refugee Week with a selection of photographs capturing in vivid detail the anticipation and anxiety of European migrants coming to Australia in the turbulent years after World War II.
• Screening of *The Staging Post* (with Settlement Services International). The film follows two Afghan Hazara refugees, Muzafar and Khadim. Stuck in Indonesia and facing many years in limbo, they built a community and started a school that inspired a refugee education revolution.

ANMM migration curator Kim Tao with one of the works in *Coming to Australia*. Photo courtesy Sydney Morning Herald
The Welcome Wall

Opened by the Governor General of Australia in 1999, the museum’s Welcome Wall has nearly 30,000 registrants from almost 200 countries.
Welcome Wall unveiling ceremonies

- Almost 30,000 registrants on the Welcome Wall
- 37 ceremonies since 1999 with a range of themes (including various countries of origin; ships of arrival; motherhood; refugees; young people)
- Over 50,000 attendees to our unveiling ceremonies
- Guest speakers – diverse range of migrants and public leaders (Governor General, Governor of NSW, Minister for the Arts, local MP, Lord Mayor)
- Corporate support, including from SBS
- Planning under way to enhance the Welcome Wall to strengthen the visitor experience.
Our migration webpage

This webpage covers:

• Australia’s immigration history
• Our online exhibitions
• the Passengers Gallery
• Tu Do
• Waves of Migration and Threads of Migration
• immigration stories
• our learning portal.

For visitors researching family history, there is also information about the resources of the Vaughan Evans Library.

Some of the migrants whose stories are published on the museum’s website.

https://www.sea.museum/about/about-the-museum/what-we-do/migration
Vaughan Evans Library

- The Vaughan Evans Library is the publicly accessible research library of the Australian National Maritime Museum.
- It contains books, journals, diaries, shipping logs, registers, photographs and postcards, audio-recordings and other resources.
- Our library staff have produced many research guides that may help with family history searching, including:
  - *Immigration – Sailing Ships*
  - *Immigration – Steamships and Passenger Liners*
  - *Child Migration*
  - *Convict Ships*
- The library also has access to the resources of ancestry.com and findmypast.com.

One of a series of photographs taken by migrant Vaughan Evans during his voyage on board SS *New Australia* from Southampton, England, to Sydney, Australia, from 19 January to 20 February 1955. (NMC 00050723)
Engaging migration stories

• 50 blogs related to stories of migrants from 30 countries. Stories are selected to reflect a balance of cultural backgrounds, immigration schemes and time periods. They often relate to current research projects, temporary exhibitions, migration anniversaries or cultural diplomacy priorities. There is a particular emphasis on women’s and children’s stories as these are often absent from the historical record.

• Julie Lasry, daughter of Skaubryn passenger Baskal Farrugia from Malta, wrote:

  This was an indescribable discovery for our family, as our father’s migration to Australia was something which, until now, we could only really visualise in our own minds.
The museum’s quarterly publication *Signals* includes migration-themed articles in each edition, with stories about people listed on the Welcome Wall, objects in the collection, exhibitions and contemporary issues.
Many different countries of origin represented in our *Signals* articles

- Lebanon
- India
- United Kingdom
- Mexico
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Hong Kong
- Jordan
- Italy
- Algeria
- Netherlands
- Iran
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Syria
- Germany
- Russia
- Austria
- Egypt
- USA
- Indonesia
- Vietnam
- Greece
- Ireland
- Malta
- Prussia
- Spain
- Turkey
- China

First fleet convict Esther Abraham – one of 13 Jewish convicts registered by the Sydney Jewish Museum (image printed in *Signals* 94 with permission of Leichhardt Library); Rugby League player Hazem El Masri, from Lebanon, was a guest speaker at a Welcome Wall unveiling in 2009 (*Signals* 89); Vijay and Sudha Khandelwal, from India, in 2005 (*Signals* 73).
For our non-English speaking visitors

- About 1/3 of our visitors are from overseas, with the largest number from China
- Simplified Chinese signage is being rolled out
- Visitor brochures are available in Japanese, Chinese and Korean
- Regular visitor tours in Mandarin and French (others on request)
- Volunteer guides speak many languages including Chinese (various dialects), Thai, German, Italian, Greek, Spanish, French, Swedish, Dutch, Czech, Russian, Hungarian, Afrikaans, Hindi, Malay, Korean, Japanese.
- Our Museum staff speak more than 15 languages.
Curriculum-aligned educational programs

- We aspire to be known nationally for our migration education program
- Onsite primary school program – “Australian migration stories” (tour and object led, enquiry-based workshop, including a suitcase with objects (left), plus oral histories and dramatised animations)
- Onsite secondary school program – primary and secondary source historical evaluation
- HSIE/History and Geography key learning areas incorporating the cross-curricular priority of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia
- Collaborations with the Sydney Jewish Museum and CoAsIt (Sydney)
- A new migration portal for teachers launched in 2018:
  - Museum Memories 1750–present (a museum tour highlighting migration stories throughout time)
  - Stories and Suitcases 1788–1900 (a hands-on workshop examining objects belonging to migrants from the period to help students understand their stories)
  - Documents and Dialogue 1901–present (a hands-on workshop investigation, using oral histories and primary source documents to help student comprehension of migrants’ experiences)
- Digital outreach program under development, focusing on classroom-ready resources.
Contributions to migration scholarship

- We have an active research and publication program that shares Australia’s migration stories through popular and peer-reviewed journals, conferences and academic partnerships.

- The migration program has a very tangible scholarly legacy, ensuring that our research output supports future research and teaching capacity.

- Recent outputs include four peer-reviewed publications and 15 conference papers.

- We are currently working with researchers from Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and the University of Amsterdam on an international cross-institutional migrant record linking project, including prototype with Dutch migrant community based around the Welcome Wall.

- Co-organised the workshop ‘Human Journeys in the Global Era: Migrant Cultural Heritage’ at the museum in 2018, hosting researchers from universities and collecting institutions across Australia and overseas.

Migration curator Kim Tao spoke on ‘Migrant cultural heritage at the Australian National Maritime Museum’ in 2018. The ‘Human Journeys’ workshop was developed in partnership with Edith Cowan University Centre for Global Issues, Australian National Commission for UNESCO, Australian National University Centre for European Studies and Australia–Germany Joint Research Cooperation Scheme.
The national migration collection

- 14,450 objects valued at $2.4 million
- Clothing and personal items, ephemera, art, photographs, folk art, coins and medals, maps, posters and postcards, books and journals, models, vessel, tools and equipment
- Representing stories of migrants from more than 50 countries
- Representing migration from first arrivals to the present day.
- Oldest object is a coin from 1637 and in the belongings of a migrant from Estonia. Most recent object is a backpack made from a rubber refugee boat collected on the Greek island of Chios.

Puppet by Lois Carrington (NMC 00042351); David Moore photograph (NMC 00029328); painting by Gina Sinozich (NMC 00037908); Swedish coin (NMC 00053053); Orontes model (NMC 00055182).
Objects associated with migration are not interesting innately because of their artistic or economic value, but because of their emotional value, which was assigned to the object by the former owner. The objects assume the role of surrogates for emotional imprints and become bearers of meaning, signification and information.

Christopher Thorsten Sommer, 2016
Lu family photo (NMC 00031941); Lu frying pan (NMC 00040052); Valerie Lederer’s front door key to the family’s home in Vienna, 1938 (NMC 00015911); ‘Doors’ poem by Walter Lederer (NMC 00015926); Lederer’s passport (NMC 00015946).
Claire Bailey sculpture (NMC 00040506); Tampa lifebuoy (NMC 00038284); Glenn Morgan sculpture (NMC 00047698).
(left) Detail of *Australian Beach Pattern* (1940) by Charles Meere. Meere’s painting is referenced by artist Ann Zahalka’s photograph from 2013 titled *The New Bathers* (NMC 00055130). Meere image reproduced with permission of Art Gallery of NSW © Charles Meere Estate, licensed by Copyright Agency; Zahalka image reproduced with permission of the artist.
Disaster at Sea by Victorian Tapestry Workshop

• Depicting the clipper ship *British Admiral*, bound for Melbourne, being wrecked off King Island, Bass Strait, in 1874. The sinking clipper is being swamped by the sea, with its crew and passengers struggling to remain on board. Some passengers have been washed overboard.

• The tapestry is based on an engraving of the *British Admiral* by Oswald Rose Campbell, which appeared in the *Illustrated Australian News* on 15 June 1874.

• The tapestry was commissioned by ANMM and is currently the most highly valued item in the national migration collection.
The Store

- The museum’s store has migrant themed books and DVDs.
- We also sell gifts aligned with temporary exhibitions such as postcards, scarves, ceramics and jewellery.
- Most of the stock items relate to the theme of culture, tradition, beliefs and religion. They are usually handmade by artisans from the relevant countries. Either made by migrants here in Australia or made in their home country and brought with them to remind them of their homeland.
In 2017 the museum co-sponsored the NSW Premier’s Harmony Day dinner for the first time in a partnership with Multicultural NSW. The museum also provided complimentary family entry passes for 20 refugees who were guests of the Premier, as well as 2 complimentary passes for “Best Cultural Dress”.

To mark Refugee Week in 2018, the museum co-hosted the Sydney screening of the 2017 documentary The Staging Post in partnership with Settlement Services International. The film was screened at more than 20 community events during Refugee Week, bringing refugees and Australians together through facilitated Q&A conversations with the filmmaker and two film leads.
At the New Beginnings Festival in Randwick, Sydney, in 2018. ANMM staff member Sabina Peritore promotes the Welcome Wall to a visitor from the Afghan Hazara refugee community.
Our migration exhibitions and programs contribute diverse range of government policy objectives

- Arts and culture
- Education
- Multiculturalism and citizenship
- Social inclusion and community harmony
- Health and wellbeing
- Cultural diplomacy
- Tourism

*Coming and Going* sculpture by Sasha Reid (2016). Resembling a chain of paper dolls, it commemorates the lives and experiences of child migrants. This public artwork is situated outside the museum.
The Australian National Maritime Museum is a statutory authority established by the Australian National Maritime Museum Act 1990, responsible to, at the time of this publication, the Minister for Communications and the Arts.

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Page 18: clockwise from top left: Kwok family, courtesy Paul Kwok; Sükran and Halit Adasal, courtesy Hale Adasal; Marie and Michel Nehme, courtesy Julie Nehme

Page 19: Artiach family, courtesy Mary-Anne Waddell