AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA

IMMIGRATION
WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY

- British settlement in Australia results in a ‘white man’s country’ attitude
- British loyalists believe that the British race have a right to rule over other races because they were superior
- Most Australians strongly support this policy because they feared that non-white migrants would:
  - be used as cheap labour
  - bring in religions other than Christianity
  - ‘pollute’ white purity with inter-marriage
  - be filled with other languages/ traditions/ customs that they didn't understand
THE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT

- Immigration Restriction Act passed federal government in 1901
- It prevented non-white migrants from coming to Australia
- Under this law, anyone the government wanted to keep out of Australia could be given a dictation test in any language
- This Act could also result in a non-European person being banned from entry for 60 years!
After WWII Australia received increasing criticism from international powers for the WAP, most notable was the commentary from the United Nations.

This became an international embarrassment for the Australian government.

The ALP dropped this policy from its platform in 1965.

Harold Holt, with the Liberal party, began to dismantle the policy in 1967.

It was completely removed by Gough Whitlam in 1973.
IMMIGRATION

POPULATE OR PERISH

- Post WWII - vulnerability of Australia realised - government initiative to populate Australia so as to ward against potential threat

- 1946 expectation that new immigrants would all be British

- In cooperation with Britain, Assisted passage scheme was developed

- Once approved, immigrant could travel for 10 pound - per adult ($600), 5 pound per child ($100).

- Calwell accepts 200,000 migrants immediately
Almost every country in Europe impacted by war, UN calls for member nations to assist ‘displaced persons’, those who lost homes during conflict/hardship of war.

Calwell agrees to participate with the International Refugee Organization though only with strict conditions.

Displaced Persons Scheme: government paid their fare, migrant had to work in repayment.

By 1951, 170,000 Europeans settled in Australia.

Assisted passage scheme officially ended in 1981.
WAR BRIDES FROM JAPAN

- Servicemen married Japanese women during their term in Japan.
- White Australia Policy banned these men from returning with their wives.
- Calwell under pressure to bend the rules - he refuses every request.
- Soldiers return to Australia without their wives.
- Matter was not resolved until 1950 - when new Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt ended the issue.
Assimilation

- Implemented in the 1940s
- Expectation of migrants and Indigenous people to abandon their own custom/tradition/beliefs in adoption of the Australia way of life
- Seen as a method of amalgamating external cultures into a distinctly Australian one
MULTICULTURALISM

- Al Grassby (MP Immigration, Labor) first used this term in 1973, two meanings present:
  - Used to describe the ethnic diversity in Australia
  - Put forward a new social policy to replace assimilation
- Multiculturalism meant that ethnic diversity would be recognised/supported, and migrants could enter Australian society at their own pace, keeping as much of their culture as they so chose
IMMIGRATION

MULTICULTURALISM

- Introduction of policy necessary because:
  - Post war migration changed Australia’s demography
  - Assimilation had failed
  - Need to minimise social conflict
  - International opinion had great influence

- Whitlam government wanted to disassociate itself with Assimilation policy of the previous Liberal-Country Party government
IMMIGRATION

VICTIMS OF WAR

- Major changes in patterns of Australian immigration began 1970s- starting with Whitlam’s ending of the WAP
- This government was committed to developing a culturally diverse but cohesive society
- 1975 Communist forces overrun the South, leaving many open to persecution
- Similar situation develops in Cambodia and Laos
- Refugees flee to Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines or Hong Kong
IMMIGRATION

VICTIMS OF WAR

- On 26 April 1976, one boat sails into Darwin carrying 5 Vietnamese, thus beginning the ‘boat people’ phenomenon
- Further 24 boats arrived in 1977
- Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser refused the Department of Immigration’s request to place boat arrivals in detention
- Fraser was determined to uphold Australia’s international obligation and was supported by the ALP
- Widespread calls to reject refugees- Fraser persists anyway
By 1980s there was a substantial flow of immigrants from Asian countries - most conservatives oppose this.

Immigrants from Asia were, however, a minority at this time.

Historian Geoffrey Blainey generated great controversy in 1984 when he claimed that the Hawke government (Labor) was promoting an Asia Australia.

Asianisation argument reignited in 1988 when Opposition Leader, John Howard launched the Liberal Party’s One Australia policy - calling for Asian immigration to be slowed to maintain social cohesion.
by 1990s the era of decency, generosity and inclusiveness in Australia’s immigration policy ended.

From 1990 the Labor Party Minister, Gerry Hand, that changed the handling of asylum seekers

Hand approves Department of Immigration’s plan for the opening of detention centres.

This was a reaction to the arrival of small numbers of Cambodian refugees who arrived by boat after the Pol Pot regime (Khmer Rouge).
It was argued that the Cambodians should not stay- due to their no longer being in danger

All were placed in detention centres- with eventual resettlement in Australia

This was a marked contrast to the generous treatment given to the Chinese students in Australia after the Tiananmen Square massacre

Hawke personally intervenes to allow them to remain in Australia for as long as they wished
JUMPING QUEUES

- There was a large increase in arrivals of asylum seekers by boat after the Howard government was elected in 1996 - causing panic and calls for more detention centres.

- Asylum seekers were branded ‘queue jumpers’ - claimed they should wait their turn, whilst in their homeland.

- After 1999, if approved for release from a detention centre an asylum seeker would be given a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) issued for three years.

- TPV holders could not accept employment, unemployment benefits or bring family members to Australia.
TAMPA AFFAIR

- Boat People issue simmered for five years- to no resolve

- On August 26 2001, Norwegian container ship, MV Tampa, answers distress call from sinking Indonesian ferry in the Indian Ocean, rescuing 438 asylum seekers

- Tampa heads toward Christmas Island, obeying international law of the sea

- Howard government panicked, threatened to persecute the ship’s captain for people smuggling
TAMPA AFFAIR

- Captain ignores Howard, continues his course
- Government sends SAS troops to board ship provoking outrage around the world
- Australia accused of evading its humanitarian duties
- New Zealand accepts 131 of the refugees, all others transferred to Nauru in the Pacific- establishing a detention centre there.
- Australia’s reputation damaged, Captain Rinnan a Hero!
CHILDREN OVERBOARD

Prior to the 2001 general election there was the ‘Children Overboard’ affair

HMAS Adelaide intercepted a boatload of asylum seekers 190km from Christmas Island on October 6

The boat broke up and sank, soon afterward children were being thrown overboard into the sea

This was supposedly to force the navy to rescue them - this claim repeated by Howard and Reith (MP Defence)

World expresses its disbelief once again!