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# Danes

– Written by Lars Kirk –

Copenhagen's Peter Petersen, first mate on Abel Tasman's ship *Zeehaen*, was the first Dane ever to visit Australia in 1642. Since then, thousands of Danes have visited the country with most spending time in Queensland. Many have also chosen to leave their homes in Denmark and begin new lives here.

Disharmony in Europe and the disbanding of the Danish army following a territorial dispute with Prussia led to quite a large migration of young, skilled Danes to Australia in the late nineteenth century, with many settling in Queensland. The new arrivals, on board ships named *Reichstag* and *Friedeburg*, disembarked in Maryborough or Brisbane, with others initially settling around Bundaberg, Kingaroy and the Darling Downs. Nowadays, Danes can be found from the Gold Coast to Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and all the way to tropical North Queensland. By 1903 migration was so steady that, according to historian Robert Orsted Jensen, 18 per cent of all non-British people naturalised in Queensland were of Danish origin.

This large proportion of Danes in Queensland led to the opening of a Danish consulate in Brisbane in 1875 and there has been an honorary Consul available to assist Danes since that time. Over the years, many international dignitaries met with the honorary Danish consul in Brisbane. A visitor's book was introduced in 2004 for guests to sign to congratulate the King or Queen on their birthday. Queensland's 'notorious' Premier from 1968 to 1987, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was the child of Danish immigrant parents.

Most Danes who arrived in Queensland were skilled tradesmen, carpenters, blacksmiths and farmers who easily found work in the gold mines or on the land. More recently, new arrivals find work on the ships that ply the coast or in the mines of northwestern Queensland. With the Australian Government's assisted migration program in place from the 1950s, even more Danes have journeyed far from home to start new lives south of the equator.

Evidence of these early Danish settlers is seen all over Queensland when walking through cemeteries with headstones bearing the remains of Jensens, Pedersens, or Larsens, all typical Danish names. While Danes have always been willing to integrate with the Queenslanders who have made them very welcome, there are still opportunities to socialise with

each other in Brisbane. The Danish Club, or *Heimdal* (meaning "home valley") is in Austin Street, Newstead and offers a place to gather and meet other Danish-Australians. The club, established 131 years ago, currently has more than 200 members who gather regularly for *smørrebrød* and cultural functions. A mother's group and kindergarten give parents an opportunity to speak Danish and share stories about their children, while products from a Danish butcher and baker are available to purchase.

The Danish Club also holds an annual Scandinavian Festival where people can experience a taste of Danish life. There are stalls selling crafts and various foods, folk dancing, music and Viking tool displays and as long as it's not too hot, you could almost imagine you were in Aarhus or Copenhagen. This year 8,000 to 9,000 people visited the festival and had a great time.

A Christmas festival is also held each year at the Danish Church in Mt Gravatt where aquavit, marzipan and other traditional food can be purchased. Christmas is usually a very special time of year for Danish families and it is usually cold, sometimes even snowing. Real pine trees are decorated and on Christmas Eve, while it is dark outside, there is singing of traditional Christmas songs and dancing around the tree. A sunny and hot Queensland Christmas in the swimming pool is quite a change and some expatriate Danes struggle to feel the same atmosphere!

These days migration has slowed but many Danes visit Queensland for its attractions. The Great Barrier Reef, the beaches, the koalas and kangaroos draw thousands of tourists and backpackers each year. This usually results in quite a bit of work for the current Honorary Danish Consul Lars Kirk. His job involves liaising both with Danes far from home and with Queenslanders wanting to visit Denmark. His role also encompasses the Faeroe Islands and Greenland. He can arrange for the re-issue of lost passports, translation of documents and is available to liaise in all situations where Danes in Queensland may need assistance. At election time, Danes can cast their vote at the Consulate.

Now that Tasmanian Mary Donaldson has married into the Danish royal family, ties between the two countries are stronger than ever. The young royal couple and their family visit Australia often. In fact, Prince Frederik

and Princess Mary visited Australia in October 2013 to mark the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Opera House, designed by another famous Dane, architect Jørn Utzon.

Queensland's capital Brisbane now boasts boutiques selling Georg Jensen jewellery and home-wares, Bang and Olufson sound equipment and stores specializing in Danish furniture. Relations between the two countries, both politically and socially, are very strong with many Australians choosing to visit the country and with a healthy trade relationship in place.

Despite 15,565 km separating Copenhagen from Brisbane, Danes in Queensland are sure not to be too homesick with almost all the comforts of home available here!

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

KIRK, Lars was born in the southern part of Jutland in Denmark. He spent most of his youth in Denmark living in Thisted, North Jutland. After some years running a radio and television business, he was employed by Oticon, a world famous hearing aid company. In 1993, he became factory director and member of the management team. In 1995, after Oticon bought the Swiss company Bernafon, he moved to Australia, together with wife Dorte. The plan was to bring the high technology company in Brisbane up to date and then return to Denmark. After three years' residency in Queensland, Lars was given permanent Australian residency and he decided to stay on and after 26 years' service with Oticon he resigned. In 2006 Lars Kirk was appointed as Honorary Danish Consul for Queensland, and in 2013 he was elevated to Honorary Consul-General.

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# Dutch

– Written by Annelies Zeissink –

## Where we came from

The Dutch are from a small densely populated, west European country called the Netherlands. Protected by dikes, 20 per cent of the Dutch land area and 21 per cent of the country's population are located below sea level. The capital city is Amsterdam and the government resides in The Hague. Currently the Netherlands consists of 12 provinces, two of which are called 'Noord Holland' (North-Holland) and 'Zuid Holland' (South-Holland). Those areas played a dominant role during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but when referring to the country as a whole, it is now incorrect to use the term Holland – a common error also made by many Dutch people. It would be comparable to using the name of one of Australia's states when meaning the nation at large. The Netherlands is about half the size of Tasmania, with a current estimated population of 16,750,000. The Dutch flag consists of red, white and blue stripes and is the oldest horizontal tricolour flag. On royal occasions an orange streamer is added to symbolise the House of Orange, from which the Dutch royal family originates. In recent years the colour orange is also used for international sporting events. Dutch serves as the national language with Frisian being an official regional language. The Dutch are some of the keenest language learners of European languages. Over 70 per cent have a good conversational knowledge of English, more than 55 per cent can communicate in German and 20 per cent in French.

## Historical notes

In 1606 the ship the *Duyfken*, under Captain Willem Janszoon, landed on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, near Weipa. This was the first documented landing of Europeans on the Australian mainland and marks the beginning of four centuries of contact and exchanges between the Netherlands and the Indigenous peoples of Australia and later European and other arrivals. About 10 years after the landing in North Queensland - more than 150 years before the British discovered Australia's East Coast – another Dutch captain, Dirk Hartog, landed at Shark Bay in Western Australia. That journey was part of the trading activities of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* or VOC).

The VOC established bases in Java and the Moluccas in the seventeenth century, in order to facilitate the spice trade between East Asia and Europe. Under the auspices of the VOC, Dutch mariners were the first to chart the coastline of the Australian continent, initially known as New Holland, and later given the name Australia. Between 1606 and 1770, more than 40 Dutch vessels made voyages to the continent 'down under'. Abel Tasman circumnavigated Tasmania and he established in 1644 that it was an island which he named Van Diemen's Land. Dutch sea-voyagers were more interested in trade than in settlement, yet they claimed sovereignty over New Holland by right of discovery. The Dutch charted the entire Australian coastline except for the eastern parts. English navigator Captain James Cook did so in 1770 and British settlement subsequently started in 1788.

In the nineteenth century the Dutch also started to settle in Australia. Some sugar growers and refiners came to Queensland via the Dutch East Indies. During World War II the Dutch fought alongside the Anglo Australian forces against the Japanese invasion and in 1942 the Dutch colonial Civil Administration, a kind of government in exile, was established at Camp Columbia in the outskirts of Brisbane (Wacol). There were then around 4 000 Dutch people in Brisbane, most of them civilian refugees. After Indonesia gained independence, Dutch refugees were repatriated to the Netherlands, but many eventually settled in Australia. Others were welcomed here under the Ex Servicemen Scheme. As a result of the 1940–1945 war, the Netherlands, like many countries in Europe, was totally depleted and experienced severe economic difficulties. To minimise the housing shortage and high unemployment, the Dutch Government encouraged emigration to countries such as the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, whilst Australia simultaneously tried to increase its population. The Netherlands Australian Migration Agreement (NAMA) was signed in 1951: 'skilled and unskilled young adults or family units with breadwinners under 45 years' were selected for assisted passage. The Australian and Netherlands governments shared the costs. However, more than sixty per cent of Dutch migrants did not receive any financial support. In Queensland subsidised accommodation was provided at the Wacol Migrant Centre. Some people stayed there for a few weeks

only, but others for several years. A small number of single self-paying females were temporary housed at the migrant depot Yungaba, at Kangaroo Point. Between 1947 and 1970 more than one million people had chosen to leave the Netherlands and around 160,000 of them settled in Australia.

## Settlement and participation

The majority of Dutch migrants, including a considerable proportion born in the Netherlands' East Indies (now Indonesia), came to Queensland during the 1950s and 1960s. They were valued as migrants as they arrived with skills, qualifications and high work ethics and were able to participate immediately in the work force. Most of them had minimal English language skills but they generally made a rapid cross-over to English and integrated well overall. Compared with the 'first wave', the contemporary generation of Dutch migrants tends to have a higher level of education and an excellent command of the English language; features shared with recent migrants from other European source countries. Attracted to the relaxed life-style and pleasant Queensland climate, they often had already spent some time in Australia as tourists, backpackers or students. Settlers from the Netherlands still observe traditions such as cross-stitch embroidery and Delft-blue pottery they proudly display in many homes, in particular by the older generation. Popular Dutch food items, such as 'poffertjes', smoked eel and salted herrings, are often served on special occasions.

Willem Andrae, the Dutch Ambassador in Canberra, was quoted in 2012 as saying that 'the seventeenth century Dutch seafarers may have found minimal trade opportunities in Australia, but the Dutch certainly have done so now'. The Netherlands rates fourth place on the list of foreign investors in Australia and it is the second largest source country from the Eurozone. More than 70 Dutch businesses are presently established in Australia, including Shell, Unilever, Philips, KLM, KPM, ABN-AMRO, Rabobank, and ING, providing employment for many people. The Amsterdam Schiphol Airport is part of the consortium that tendered successfully to purchase Brisbane's International Airport. Dutch migrants to Queensland have contributed substantially towards small business in areas as diverse as tourism, fashion, catering, finance, antiques, building industry, house painting, floral industry, farming and agriculture. A considerable number of first and second generation Dutch migrants have become professionals in

medicine, healthcare, teaching, music, accounting and manufacturing. Many commenced their own successful businesses. Various Australian industries, such as AMP, Boral, Mayne Nickless and Qantas, are now operating successfully in the Netherlands. They are attracted by the efficiency of the transport and communication infrastructure and by the strategic geographic location of the Netherlands as a key distribution point for goods intended for the European Union. Dutch backpackers, as well as family-members of Dutch settlers, tend to be keen travellers to Australia, which is of course positive for the local tourist industry.

## Community associations

The social needs of Dutch migrants were historically met by their involvement with Dutch oriented clubs and organisations, some of which were highly compartmentalised into religion-affiliated groups, consequently leading to minimal community cohesion and consensus. The number of new arrivals from the Netherlands is now rather small, hence the Dutch Australian population is ageing faster than Australia's population at large. The second generation tends to show minimal interest in the original social groups. No longer viable, organisations such as the Australian Netherlands Chamber of Commerce (ANCOC) and the Netherlands Ex-Servicemen and Women Association (NESWA) ceased to exist during the last few years. An example of an association still going strong is the Netherlands Association of Queensland; the only organisation with its own club-house, located at Richlands. Other groups still active are: the Borrelclub Brisbane (a businessmen's social club), the carnival club The Stirrers, the Dutch language group of Radio 4EB FM and the Dutch Alumni group. A small group of newly arrived people of Dutch background with young children meet regularly on the last Sunday of the month in one of Brisbane's parks. Lessons in Dutch language and culture are given at the Duyfken School for children of primary school age (after normal school hours). The younger generation communicates solely via e-mail and some of them are keen to organise at monthly get-togethers for informal socialising.

When realising the need for a Dutch-specific retirement village, the Dutch community came together and established the Netherlands Retirement Village Association of Queensland for the purpose of building a retirement village. It was opened in Birkdale in 1978 and given the name Prins Willem Alexander Village

(after the Dutch Crown Prince). Originally the village consisted of independent living units only, but a hostel, serviced apartments and nursing home sections have been added over the years, and the complex is still expanding. Most staff-members are bi-lingual in English and Dutch, a boon for the benefit of aged people who through language regression have reverted to their first language. Typical Dutch food is often served and traditional festivities such as 'Sinterklaas' (St Nicholas) are celebrated yearly. Residents as well as many people living outside the village regard the annual 'April Fest' to be a highlight on the calendar of Dutch events.

The Dutch Australian Community Action Federation – Queensland Inc. ([www.cybadex.com/daca](http://www.cybadex.com/daca)) is an umbrella organisation to which 10 member-groups are presently affiliated (compared with 16 groups when initiated in 1996). Current activities include the following: Friendly Visiting Network, Dutch Helpline (a community telephone-service) and the Resource Centre (the 'archive' for Dutch Australian historical material). In 2001 the Federation published the book, *Our Story – Experiences of the Dutch in Queensland*, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The former Dutch Reformed Church, which originated in the Netherlands, has changed its name to Christian Reformed Church of Australia and become predominantly Australian. Up to a few years ago, the Uniting Church provided services in Dutch. Catholics attended mainstream local churches from the start and some few religious services in the Dutch language were held around Christmas time.

Long-term Honorary Consul for The Kingdom of The Netherlands in Queensland, Sir Kasper Kuiper, appointed by Queen Beatrix in 1993, a successful Australian businessman and former Captain in the Royal Dutch Navy, also demonstrates considerable personal commitment to Australian and Dutch relations and to the Dutch community in Brisbane.

On the 4th of May of each year the Netherlands and the Dutch in Queensland celebrate the end of World War II. A monument was erected in George Street, Brisbane, close to Parliament House to honour the memory of both Dutch and Dutch Indonesian service personnel, as well as all civilians who have suffered

and died as a consequence of war. The 15th of August is also commemorated as it marks the end, in 1945, of Japanese rule in the former Netherlands East Indies, now the Republic of Indonesia.

## Cultural links

There are strong cultural connections: Dutch and Australian orchestras and dance companies perform regularly in each other's country. For instance, distinguished Dutch conductor Eduard de Waard conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 1995 to 2004 and notable Australian film-maker of Dutch origin, Paul Cox, exhibited his films at the International Film Festival in Rotterdam in 2002. A number of exhibitions featuring works by Dutch painters were held in Brisbane, such as Dutch Art of the Golden Age at the Queensland Art Gallery, with valuable paintings from Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. Dutch migrants played an important role in the development of football (known in Australia as soccer). The two countries regularly compete against each other in hockey and swimming.

The ties between Australia and the Netherlands have existed for more than four centuries. As one of the largest ethnic groups, the Dutch have contributed significantly, both at economic and cultural levels, to their country of choice, Australia, and to the state of Queensland. Whilst Dutch migrants' cultural heritage remains important to most, they have generally integrated well and fully participate in the activities of the mainstream Australian population. They may have retained some of the characteristics and language of their former fellow citizens still living in their former home country but they have certainly become Australians and an integral part of Queensland's multicultural population.

### Bibliography

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

ZEISSINK, Annelies was born in Frederiksoord, a small village in the Dutch province of Drenthe and she also lived in a number of other places in the Netherlands. In 1962, aged 20, she arrived with her Dutch husband in Queensland. In 1996 she gained a Bachelor of Nursing degree with honours from Griffith University. Before her recent retirement she was employed as registered nurse at several residential aged care facilities. She held various positions in Dutch community organisations, including board member of the Netherlands Retirement Village Association of Queensland and she is currently the president/secretary of the Dutch Australian Community Action (DACA) Federation – Queensland. In 1996 she was coordinator of the National Dutch Australian Community Care Conference, held in Brisbane. Her interest in Dutch community affairs began during a research project about the Dutch elderly in Brisbane.

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# East Timorese

– *Written by Afonso Corte Real and José Alexandrino Corte Real* –

Officially bilingual East Timor or Loro Sa'e – meaning 'Timor Sun Rise' in Tetum with the other national language being Portuguese, is a rugged and mountainous country. Mount Ramelau reaches 2,963 metres compared with Australia's Mount Kosciuszko at 2,228 metres. The independent state of East Timor consists of the eastern part of the island of Timor and includes the enclave of Oecussi located in West Timor, the island of Atauro on the northern coast and the small and uninhabited island of Jaco. The small and beautiful island state consists of 14,874 square kilometres and is located less than 600 kilometres from Darwin.

The Portuguese began to trade with the island of Timor early during the sixteenth century and colonisation began around 1633. On account of frequently clashing with Dutch interests in the region, a treaty was signed in 1859 by which Portugal ceded the western portion of the island to the Dutch. The Portuguese somehow managed to retain the enclave of Oecussi. During the twentieth century, Timor became involved in violent conflicts lasting almost 30 years. During the Japanese occupation of Timor during 1942–45, a special bond of friendship and mutual assistance was established between the Timorese people and Australia. Many Timorese died while loyally supporting Australian commandos in occupied Timor and the Australians provided military training and other assistance.

During the early hours of 7 December 1975, East Timor was invaded by Indonesian military forces. This invasion was supported by local militias opposed to East Timor gaining its political independence. Portugal was powerless to help. The East Timorese asked Australia and the United Nations (UN) for assistance, but to little effect. Timorese freedom fighters, who enjoyed much popular support, withdrew to the hills where they continued a long and bloody struggle for their people's survival.

On 30 August 1999, through an UN supervised popular referendum, an overwhelming majority of the people of Timor-Leste voted for independence from Indonesia. Unfortunately, during the next three weeks anti-independence militias, which were supported by the Indonesian military, commenced a large-scale scorched-earth campaign of retribution. Consequently, there were many casualties and some 300,000 people had to find refuge in western Timor. Most of East

Timor's infrastructure, including homes, irrigation and water supply systems, schools, and nearly 100 per cent of the country's electrical grid were destroyed.

On 20 September 1999, Australian-led peacekeeping troops were deployed in the ravaged country, with peacekeeping forces from other countries, to end the violence. Coinciding with the arrival of Australian troops in East Timor, a new wave of refugees from were evacuated to Australia. Some of these unfortunate people came to Queensland where a number of them ultimately became permanent residents. Most East Timorese in Queensland now live in the greater Brisbane region where they remain a small community, experiencing little growth in numbers. The East Timorese quickly felt at home in Brisbane. Therefore to date, Brisbane has also remained one of the favourite destinations for sponsored students from East Timor who over the last 30 years have been generously supported by various Australian organisations.

In recent years many Australians have visited or even settled in East Timor. There are now active international business contacts between East Timor and Queensland and inter-marriages are quite common, in Queensland as well as in East Timor. In the capital Dili, Australians run restaurants, tourist facilities and many more work for the International Stabilisation Force, the UN, AusAID and Caritas Australia. Timorese people living in Queensland take a great interest in seeing their small island nation slowly growing towards a self-sustaining economy, a goal that is only possible with continuing assistance from Australia and other countries well disposed towards the people of East Timor.

Before the Portuguese withdrew from East Timor in 1975, some 97 per cent of the population were Timorese, including Mestissos of mixed Portuguese and Timorese blood, 2 per cent were Chinese, and less than one per cent were of European Portuguese origin or descent. East Timor has remained to this day a country of great ethnic and cultural diversity. There are some 12 ethnic groups with their own languages and for sheer practical purposes Bahasa Indonesia is now widely used. Nine Austronesian language groups are represented including Tetum, Mambae, Tokodede, Kemak, Galole, Idate, Waima'a and Naueti, and three other groups: Bunak, Makasae and Fatuluku.

The Tetum people live in two separate geographic areas within East Timor. The Portuguese used a simplified version of Tetum as a lingua franca for Dili. Tetum is now more widely understood throughout the western areas of the island of Timor because the large contingent of refugees of 1999 took their language with them to western Timor.

When the Indonesian army invaded East Timor in 1975, many Timorese fled the country. Thousands of refugees went to Europe and Australia, where most of them settled in Darwin, Sydney and Melbourne. The East Timorese who stayed back resisted the policies of assimilation by defending their cultural heritage, their traditional local languages as well as the language of the former colonisers, Portuguese. Whenever the people of Timor felt severely oppressed, clandestine opposition groups based in the towns and in the Timorese hinterland never faltered. On 20 May 2002, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste became the first new sovereign state of the twenty-first century and during the same year joined the UN as a full member.

Apart from the East Timorese community in Brisbane, a few chose to settle in central or northern Queensland. Nevertheless, a few families from East Timor now live in Cairns. The Queensland capital has also become the home for a substantial number of Timorese Chinese. Many of them now follow careers in catering, restaurants or in other small business ventures and they tend to live on the south side. When living in East Timor the Chinese were not openly involved politically, but during the long occupation of the homeland, some individuals quietly lent support to the activists fighting for independence. Older members of the East Timorese community also remember that the mainstream population in Timor and the Timorese Chinese shared a common history of suffering from discrimination, as during Portuguese colonial rule both groups were considered second-class citizens in their own homeland.

The East Timorese are traditionally Roman Catholics, a consequence of colonisation by the Portuguese. The Philippines is the only other South East Asian country with a national heritage of Catholicism because the colonisation by Portugal's European neighbour Spain, was also accompanied by missionary activities. The Brisbane Canossian Sisters at Oxley accommodated the first group of East Timorese refugees who arrived in Brisbane late in 1976. Even now some of the former

female East Timorese refugees retain a relationship with the Oxley Canossa Nursing Home. They are employed as nursing assistants or undertake other generic jobs. The former male refugees initially cared for by the Canossian Sisters became 'new Aussie battlers' working in factories and other areas of unskilled employment. These former refugees from East Timor now feel rewarded for the hard work they undertook for the benefit of their families. Their children and grandchildren are now professionally successful as they were able to access educational services identical to those available to mainstream Australian children. The Australian education system thus gave the second generation of East Timorese in Queensland the necessary work skills for careers in the new homeland. They can participate fully in the Australian workplace and if they wish to return to East Timor for the purpose of nation building, their Australian qualifications and work experiences are fully transferable.

Most of the former refugees from Timor living in Brisbane used to dream about an independent and economically viable and democratic East Timorese state. This dream continues to edge closer and closer to reality. Considerable economic growth has been achieved, yet Timor-Leste still offers a challenging business environment. It is significant that the government of Timor-Leste and the people of East Timor are tirelessly working towards reconciliation between the people of East Timor and the people of Indonesia thus enhancing mutual prosperity and peaceful interaction by both nations. Timor Leste and Indonesia are now leading the world by example, by Indonesia supplying the basic economic needs to Timor. Thousands of East Timorese are also working and studying in Indonesia, many of them on scholarships. There are now accords in place for regional security and cooperation between Australia, Indonesia and East Timor.

The Benarrawa Community Development Association Inc. located at 79 Waratah Avenue, Graceville, serves as the liaison body and meeting place for the East Timorese living in Brisbane. This endeavour is supported by many Australians with a continuing sense of solidarity for the people from Timor-Leste regardless of whether they are living in their home country or whether they have chosen to make Australia their permanent home.

I, Afonso Corte Real, was educated in Brisbane and took a degree at the University of Queensland majoring in political science and international relations. I wish to thank the people of Queensland and Australia for giving me sanctuary and opportunities for work and education. I, a former refugee from East Timor, have now returned to live and work in Timor-Leste to fulfil my duty as an East Timorese.

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## AUTHOR PROFILES

CORTE REAL, Afonso was born in Ainaro, East Timor. He attended school in Dili and when aged 13 he became a refugee. His family went to Portugal in 1976 where he successfully completed his secondary education, in Lisbon. The Corte Real family came to Brisbane in 1982 and Afonso began working as a technician in the Telstra Mobile Network to help the family economically. Afonso has 13 brothers and sisters. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Queensland he was employed by the Brisbane City Council and the Australian Taxation Office. He returned to East Timor to help the new country with the arduous process of national rebuilding. Now living in the capital Dili, he is working as a consultant in public policy, political campaigning and marketing.

CORTE REAL, José Alexandrino, Afonso's father, was born in Balibo, East Timor. His parents were assassinated by the Japanese military during World War II. Young José was sent for his education to Portugal and returned to Timor in 1957/58. Here he joined the army and worked later on as a draftsman for the public service. After returning for work to Portugal for another six and a half years he again settled in East Timor. He became for a time a sympathizer for a moderate political party seeking political independence for East Timor but soon withdrew from any party engagement. Unlike his son Afonso, José remained in Brisbane. José has been the motivator and mentor for his extended East Timorese family and the East Timorese community in Brisbane in regard to the past and future road to independence and statehood of East Timor. He has a thorough knowledge of the cultural history of the people of Timor and their traditions and their hopes for the future.

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# Ecuadorians

– *Written by Francisco Balon* –

Ecuador, with over 14 million people, and Chile are the only countries in South America without a common border with Brazil. The Galapagos Islands and the surrounding marine reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Centre, are a living museum and a unique showcase of evolution. These islands, which are almost 1,000 km to the west of mainland Ecuador, were visited by Darwin in 1835. Ecuador declared its independence in 1809 and became a republic in 1830. Mestizos, the descendants of Amerindians and Spaniards, make up over 70 per cent of the Ecuadorian population and the remainder population is mainly Amerindians and Europeans of Spanish background. Guayaquil with 2.4 million people is the principal commercial and manufacturing centre as well as the country's main port, whereas Quito is the national capital. Following a financial crisis in 1999 Ecuador replaced its currency with the US dollar.

Most of the 10,000 Ecuadorian community members in Australia live and work in big cities. They primarily live in Sydney and Melbourne, the latter city boasting a sizeable and vibrant community, whereas the former city has by far the largest Ecuadorian population in Australia. Until the late 1960s there were very few Ecuadorians in Australia – the Australian census of 1911 listed only two Ecuador-born people living in this country. There are currently some 300 Ecuadorian students in Australian institutions and a sizeable number have come to Brisbane. There are seven connected Ecuadorian families in the Brisbane region. They originate from different regions in Ecuador and met up after their arrival in Queensland. Amongst the small number of Ecuadorians in Queensland there is a successful visual artist who lives on the Gold Coast and an Ecuadorian-educated psychologist. Most of the other adult Ecuadorians are employed in jobs with few skills requirements. The few Ecuadorians in Southeast Queensland speak with each other almost exclusively in Spanish, although most of them have lived here for many years. In their chosen lifestyles they are well integrated with the ways other Queenslanders live and work. They occasionally meet in the Columbian La Luna Club, as they do not have a club of their own and they also maintain links with other Latin Americans, as some of the Ecuadorians have partners from other South American countries. Ecuadorians in Southeast Queensland feel comfortable with living here and

they value their Australian citizenship. In the age of the internet they no longer feel isolated as they can communicate with friends and relatives in the home country and their information needs are satisfied by media publications in Spanish that they can access on their computers.

Children of Ecuadorians play soccer and like most Latin Americans, Ecuadorian adults remain great soccer fans and appreciate the Latin American games broadcast by SBS television. They also love the rhythms of the music they grew up with in the home country and enjoy dancing, socialising and cooking some of the traditional Ecuadorian dishes. The vast majority of Ecuadorians in the home country are Roman Catholics, a faith the people continue to embrace when settling in other countries. Ecuadorians in Australia rejoiced on learning in 2013 that a Latin American was elected as Pope.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

BALON, Francisco was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, where he received a university education up to the third year. Subsequently he was offered a scholarship for study in Poland where he graduated as a textile engineer. He also took a Polish degree in marketing. In Queensland, Francesco works in a textile factory. Latin Americans value Australia's commitment to university education and he was elated when one of his daughters completed a degree at the Queensland University of Technology. A multicultural Queenslanders, Francesco was fortunate to have had an international educational formation equipping him with trilingual skills: Spanish, Polish and English. During his 10 years in Poland he immersed himself in Polish life and as part of his multicultural Australian life he frequents the Polish Club in Milton. His main source of information from Ecuador is the newspaper *El Comercio*, which is accessed on the internet.

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# Egyptians

– Written by Ezzat Guindy –

Officially called the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egypt has an amazingly long history of a modern state as some of its land has been inhabited since the 10th millennium BC. The population of Egypt has always been concentrated along the small strip of cultivable land all along the Nile flowing into its fertile delta. Only four per cent of Egyptian land is arable. This unique geographic feature shaped the amazing history and civilisation of Egypt since antiquity. When the Suez Canal was built people also began to settle in substantial numbers in and near the city of Suez, the canal marking the transcontinental border between the African and Middle Eastern sections of Egypt. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798 there were only about 3 million Egyptians whereas today the country has close to 90 million people, with over eight million in Cairo.

There are an estimated 5,000 Egyptians in Queensland, if you include the second generation. They are predominantly Coptic Christians, whereas the Muslim community consists of less than 1 000 people. In Egypt, Islam is the state religion and only two other religions are recognised: Christianity and Judaism. Some 90 per cent of Egyptians are mainly Sunni Muslims and the Coptic Christians represent some 9 per cent of the Egyptian population. Nearly all Copts are followers of the Evangelist and Apostle St Mark, the founder of the Church who became the first Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria. In Queensland and Australia the Copt majority gets on well with their fellow Egyptians who adhere to the Muslim faith.

Egyptians are traditionally attracted to Queensland's weather which they identify as being close to the Middle Eastern climate. In fact many of them claim that the climate in Queensland is vastly superior to that of the other Australian states. More than half of Egypt's population are urban dwellers. Therefore migrants from Egypt are attracted to urban Queensland and they have settled in the major cities and towns in Queensland. Some of the more recent migrants were also keen to leave behind congested, noisy and polluted cities in a country beset with considerable political problems. Cairo is one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

Christians emigrants from Egypt tend to be well educated. In 1952 when the populist General Nasser became Egypt's leader, many successful professionals left Egypt for destinations around the world, including

Australia. Although he introduced free education for Egyptian children, he ousted many highly educated and skilled people, including Copts, Muslims and people of non-Egyptian origins. Those migrant/refugees were looking for countries where people were free. As Egypt used to be a British colony, many migrants to Queensland and Australia had a good knowledge of English. Long ago Cairo and Alexandria had large colonies of people from European countries and the educated early migrants to Australia were used to European influences in their home country. During the nineteenth century Italian was used as lingua franca in Alexandria and French enjoyed much prestige in urban Egypt. The main foreign languages taught in Egypt today are English, French, German and Italian.

Egyptian Copts built a number of religious institutions in Queensland. There are Coptic churches in Coopers Plains, in North Strathpine and in Helensvale. In addition there are monasteries in Calamvale and Beaudesert. The Egyptian congregations are joined by Copts from other countries, including Ethiopia, Eritrea and other African countries without a church of their own in Queensland. No one in Queensland preaches in Coptic but prayers are said in Arabic, English and Coptic. In Egypt the Coptic Church is not allowed to use the Coptic language. The use of English by the Church is important in Queensland because new generations of Copts only know English. I have asked the Coptic Pope in Egypt to help us in Australia with the supply of religious information in English as we do not wish to lose our children and grandchildren to the faith. The numerically small community of Egyptian Muslims does not own a place of worship of their own and they usually join for worship a mosque close to their home. The presence in Southeast Queensland of Copt-owned religious buildings of worship is an indication of the success of our migrant community.

Egypt is the acknowledged cultural leader in the Arab world and during his short period as leader of Egypt, Nasser became already the undisputed voice speaking for the emerging Arab world. Standard Egyptian Arabic is for the entire Arab world what Parisian French wants to be for the 200 million French speakers. Egyptians in Queensland and Australia are aware of Egypt's status as a cultural leader and they take pride in the monuments and achievement of their country's history. Egyptian Copts broadcasting on Radio 4EB have become a prime voice for the Arabic speaking

communities in Queensland. Their listeners include Arabic speakers with diverse national, cultural, political and religious backgrounds and interests.

Egyptians are happy to blend in with Queensland's multicultural society. Educated Egyptians in Queensland are working as medical doctors, engineers, teachers, researchers or academics. Like many other migrant communities they are keen to give their children a good education so that they can become an integral part of Queensland's society and pursue a career. Retaining some features of Egyptian heritage is also considered important in areas as different as language, singing, dancing and the delights of a culinary tradition, which evolved in a remarkable country.

The Pyramids are the national symbol of our home country. It is not widely known that an Egyptian living on the Gold Coast designed the symbol for Melbourne, namely the tower on the Cultural Centre.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

GUINDY, Ezzat was born in Tanta, Arab Republic of Egypt. He studied Arabic language and history at the University of Cairo and migrated to Australia in 1968. He became a long-term employee of the Queensland University of Technology. He also taught Arabic at the Institute of Modern Language until his retirement. In 1969 he became the inaugural President of the Egyptian Australian Association in Brisbane, a position he held for 29 years. He was also a foundation member of the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland serving over 30 years as a vice-president and as a long serving chairman of its Education Committee. Ezzat also had a long association as a volunteer broadcaster with Radio 4EB. In April 2001 his first historical book was launched, *Brisbane West by Southwest – an Illustrated History*. He has also published a number of scientific articles and in more recent years he has written extensively on diverse aspects of Egypt's past, the Coptic communities in Queensland and about Brisbane.

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# English

– Written by Meredith A., Marcus K., and Barbara Harnes –

## From penal settlements to the twenty-first century

The presence of an entry on ‘the English’ in a collection interpreting multiculturalism in Queensland might almost seem counter-intuitive. In terms of Queensland’s history, the English represent first, the colonising impulse of an overseas mother country and second, the cultural dominance of Anglo-Saxon whiteness that prevailed as official policy in not only Queensland but Australia until at least the 1960s. Accordingly, the presence of the English and how we should think of them in the context of modern multicultural Queensland needs some adjustment, as the English as a group have moved from being a culturally dominant group through the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries to one cultural group among many others in the twenty-first.

England, one of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is approximately 16,500km from Brisbane, but has been instrumental in shaping Australia’s history since white settlement in 1788. The British Isles themselves have been subject to continual processes of invasion and immigration over a chronology spanning several thousand years. Before the Romans conquered parts of the British Isles by 43AD, there had earlier been invasion and settlement by Celtic tribes. In the post-Roman period the British Isles again faced numerous processes of immigration and invasion, including the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Vikings.

Queensland, of course, is named after a Queen of England: Queen Victoria (d.1901). The name of the state is evocative and imperially potent, claiming the area as a territory under the sovereignty and cultural dominance of the Queen and her government. Victoria was in a position to have the state named after her because the English did not just receive migrants and invaders but in turn colonised, or even invaded, many parts of the world. Victoria was also the Empress of India and eventually she and her son and grandson governed over an extensive British Empire. This Empire was not exclusively an English undertaking, but its centre of gravity was London, the English capital. Subsequently, after the collapse and dissolution of the British Empire from the 1940s onwards, peoples from races who had been colonial subjects migrated to the British Isles, especially to English cities such

as London, Leeds, Leicester and Bradford, coming from Africa, India and the West Indies. Cumulatively this means that the modern day English people are both racially and culturally a conglomeration of many different influences. While from the perspective of Queensland, ‘English’ may suggest the colonising power and carry overtones of cultural uniformity, modern England is itself a multi-cultural society, not least in its major cities such as London, where native-born English people now form a minority of the population.

What was first the British Colony of New South Wales, spreading out from Botany Bay, reached areas we now call Redlands, Moreton Bay and Brisbane by the 1820s. By 1824 there was a detachment of army personnel and convicts at Moreton Bay and by 1825 they were at Brisbane Town.<sup>1</sup> We should be cautious, however, in thinking of the army and the convicts just as the ‘English’. Many (but by no means all) of the convicts were Irish, and the army regiments came from all parts of the British Isles. Nonetheless, we should also consider that cultural dominance lay with the English among the earliest colonisers. The commandants and then the governors reported to the Colonial Office in Whitehall and took instructions from colonial masters in England.<sup>2</sup>

Reinforcing this impression of the cultural dominance of the English, one other group came to join the garrison and the convicts – the chaplains of the Church of England. To jump forward for a moment from the 1820s to the 1960s, when the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane Sir Reginald Halse died in 1962, the centre of Brisbane came to a standstill as his cortege passed. The scale of this public mourning reminds us how closely connected the Church of England (later called the Anglican Church) and Englishness were in Queensland. From the time of the penal settlement until the 1970s (when it was overtaken by the Catholic Church) the Anglican Church was the numerically largest in the state. It was also a conspicuous part of public life. Queensland’s governors, who were

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Harrison, “...not likely to command attention or to conciliate general esteem”: the Revd John Vincent, First Clergyman at Moreton Bay”, in Marcus Harnes, Lindsay Henderson and Gillian Colclough (eds), *From Augustine to Anglicanism: The Anglican Church in Australia and Beyond* (Milton, 2010), p.94.

<sup>2</sup> J.G.Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), pp.1–29.

typically English army officers from the upper crust, were practising Anglicans and so were many members of the state's legislature, the judiciary and the municipalities.

The migration of the English to Queensland has been a constant factor since the foundation of first the penal colony and then the state. There has not been a period in Queensland's history when English people have not moved here in sizable numbers. Their reasons for doing so have obviously changed. The earliest were compelled to do so as either convicts or servants of the state and the nascent colonial Church. Later Queensland, like other parts of Australia, welcomed the so-called 'ten pound poms', English families who migrated cheaply under sponsorship from successive Australian governments, who upheld the White Australia Policy and who privileged white migrants from the United Kingdom. Today the White Australia Policy no longer prevails and many younger Australians would even find its former official status to be shocking. Nonetheless the percentage of Queenslanders who trace direct British descent remains high at over 10 per cent of the population, not least because of the number who entered as the ten pound poms. In recent decades, certainly the 1990s and the 2000s, the types of English migrants have been demographically broad in reflection of the diversity of the English population back in the British Isles. Many of the migrants settling in Queensland choose to go no further than Brisbane, and many are so-called white collar workers who find employment in the professions, such as law or medicine.

The English population in Queensland has been steadily increasing. To consider the last 15 years, figures taken in the last three censuses record that numbers have risen progressively in the last decade. In 2001 approximately 850,000 citizens were documented as being born in England. The 2006 census counted 860,000 residents that were English born and by the 2011 census this figure had risen to approximately 910,000 residents born in England. This means that behind those who are listed as 'Australian', English is the second largest nationality in Australia. Census data for 2011 states that 4.1 per cent of the population of Queensland was English born.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, *Diversity Figures* (Queensland Government, 2012), p. 4.

For many English people, Brisbane is considered to be the city to migrate to. Brisbane is seen as a more attractive option than Sydney and Melbourne. Expatriate author and commentator Adrian Davies argues that 'Queensland's capital is a lucrative destination for those relocating from the Old Dart.'<sup>4</sup> There are many factors which place Brisbane ahead of its southern competitors as a desirable place of residence. Davies suggests that the climate, health services and affordable private schools are important and these are all significant points for understanding the type of lifestyle that English people hope to enjoy in Queensland.<sup>5</sup>

The proportion of English born residents in various Local Government Areas is consistently in the top four nationalities. For example, in the Gold and Sunshine Coasts the proportions are 5.6 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively. The percentage of British, as opposed to strictly English, residents is a moot point. Specific suburbs of Brisbane, Brisbane City, South Brisbane and Mount Ommaney have high levels of English born residents with 4.4 per cent, 3.7 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively. Katherine Feeney cites a NatWest survey from 2010 which suggests that 10.4 per cent of the population of Brisbane is British. This is contradicted by the 2006 census which places the figure at 4.5 per cent.<sup>6</sup> But: 'Regardless of the figure, it accounted for a significant portion of the population born in the British Isles.'<sup>7</sup> These points are a reminder that much census data and other forms of information about migration do not particularly distinguish between the English and the other peoples of the British Isles, chiefly the Scots and Welsh. Nonetheless available data does suggest that the English form by far the largest grouping among the 'British' migrants who have settled in Queensland. We should also remember that, as was indicated above, post-war England is a multicultural society and by no means all English migrants to Queensland will be from the Anglo-Saxon population. Latter-day English migrants are themselves multicultural and add to the richness of this aspect of Queensland life.

Club involvement is an important factor which exists among the expatriate community. For example, the Brisbane Everton Football club enables expatriates to

<sup>4</sup> Katherine Feeney, 'Bris Vegas or little Brit-bane?', *Queensland Times* (17 July, 2010), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



keep in touch with each other. Another advantage for the expat community is the vibrant social scene it has generated. With more than 1,000 new arrivals each week this has allowed the social scene to flourish. John Aitken, Chief Executive Officer of Brisbane Marketing argues that '(t)his rapid growth has delivered new entertainment precincts, an exciting live-music scene and quaint urban villages.<sup>8</sup> Within broader Queensland society, Englishness is perhaps more diffuse than other cultural or national groupings. Aside from some regional variations, English migrants speak the same language as the host society and there is no need of clubs or societies to celebrate a national language. It is also difficult to pinpoint many distinctively English events, ceremonies or dates, such as the high visibility of the Chinese New Year for example, because the original influence of English customs, laws and traditions have permeated and shaped mainstream society from the earliest phases of European settlement.

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## AUTHOR PROFILES

HARMES, Barbara was born in Queensland from mixed English, German and Danish ancestry. She is a descendant of Danish refugees who fled from Schleswig Holstein during the Franco-Prussian War. She teaches into international language programs at the University of Southern Queensland and for many years has taught students from many parts of the world including Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Her research spans a number of fields from nineteenth-century literature to current pedagogy. Her PhD from the University of Southern Queensland investigated the history of nineteenth-century sexuality and she has also obtained qualifications in English Literature and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

HARMES, Marcus K. was born in Australia of mixed English, German and Danish descent. He has long been interested in racial politics and whiteness studies and publishes in this field, including studies of racial identity in works of twentieth century popular culture such as Doctor Who and other science fiction works. He lectures in the tertiary enabling programs of the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba. His work involves providing tertiary access to widely diverse bodies of students, including many refugees. He holds a PhD in British History from University of Queensland and other qualifications in German language and Ancient History.

HARMES, Meredith A. was born in London but has lived in Australia since an early age. She teaches into communication and nursing programs at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research concerns politics, religion and society in twentieth-century Queensland, and she has recently published an article in *Queensland History Journal* on religious tensions between Protestants and Catholics in 1950s politics. Current research includes studies of recent British constitutional history and popular culture. These stem from her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Queensland, a Diploma of Modern Languages from the University of New England and a Masters from the the University of Southern Queensland in Public Relations.

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<sup>8</sup> Caroline Frost, 'Why is Brisbane attracting so many Brits?', *BBC News Magazine* (13 July 2010), [www.bbc.co.uk/news/10600464?print=true](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10600464?print=true), accessed 4 February 2012.

# Eritreans

– *Written by Saba Abraham* –

Asmara is the capital of Eritrea, a country with 5.5 million people. The colour red of the national flag symbolises the blood of the martyrs, green symbolises the country's fertile agriculture and the blue stands for the Red Sea to the east of the country. Nine ethnic groups make up the population of Eritrea: Tigrinya, Tigre, Saho, Bilen, Beja, Afar, Nara, Kunama, and Rashida. The official languages are Tigrinya and Arabic. There are two major religions in Eritrea: Christians belonging to the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant denominations, and Muslims.

Eritrea experienced colonisation by the Turks, Egyptians and Italians. More recently military conflicts with Ethiopia caused enormous damage to people and the land. Thousands of unfortunate Eritreans had to flee to neighbouring Sudan. In 1993 in an United Nations sponsored popular referendum, Eritreans overwhelmingly voted for independence and the country declared its sovereignty. In 1998 fighting erupted again between Eritrea and Ethiopia, a consequence of a border dispute. Unfortunately, many Eritreans were again forced to flee after having returned home from living in exile in Sudan, beginning with the year 1991. The border conflict developed into a full scale war and lasted until the year 2000. The Peace Agreement of Algiers between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which included the establishment of a boundary commission, did not hold.

By the end of 2001, all dissenting voices demanding democratic reform in Eritrea were quelled. Eritreans were either arrested, driven into exile, or cowed into silence. There was no free press and basic rights and freedoms were denied. According to Amnesty International (2012) an estimated 3,000 Eritreans fled the country every month, mostly to Sudan and Ethiopia. In 2011 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that there were 250,000 Eritrean refugees living mainly in neighbouring African countries. Many Eritrean refugees perished when crossing inhospitable lands or in the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach Europe through Italy.

Eritreans began to settle in Queensland in the early 1990s. Most of them came through Sudan and Cairo. The total number of Eritreans in Queensland is estimated to be 1,000, including their Australia-born children. Most Eritreans in Queensland live in the Southside of Brisbane.

Some of the Eritrean new arrivals to Queensland used to live in Libya under the UNHCR protection. During the

Libyan unrest they fled to Tunisia and were living in local refugee camps. These refugees have mainly Islamic backgrounds. They settled largely in Toowoomba where they were welcomed by previously arrived Eritrean people. In addition to these new arrivals there were two families and a single person who came to Toowoomba via Sudan.

Eritrean refugees are very grateful to the Australian government and the Australian people for accepting them for settlement. Muslim Eritreans experience some difficulties adjusting to the Australian way of life, as it is compulsory for every Muslim to pray in congregation every Friday afternoon. Shaking hands with a female is not considered appropriate. In multicultural Australia, Eritreans place much importance on being understood and respected for having different cultural and religious traditions and needs. High schools and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Institutes do have sufficient institutional flexibility to make some allowances for people with migrant or refugee backgrounds that do not completely conform to the lifestyle of the Australian mainstream population.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

ABRAHAM, Saba was born in Eritrea and arrived in Australia in 1992, with her daughter Reem. 'I couldn't speak any English and did not know about Centrelink and banks and all those things. But I just thought this was heaven as a country.' At 13 her education was cut short and at 14 she was a freedom fighter with the Eritrean Liberation Front. Freedom in Australia was only accessible after a decade as a refugee in Sudan. Saba now owns the Mu'ooz (Ethiopian and Eritrean) restaurant in West End (previously located in Moorooka), where she also conducts work-based training programs for African migrant women. She was a founding member of the Queensland African Communities Council and the initiator of the Eritrean Australian Women and Family Support Network. In 2009 Saba was awarded the Fair Go Pride of Australia medal. Her selflessness is legendary in her community. She loves peace, puts a human face on the plight of refugees, has fought since childhood for female empowerment and excels as a volunteer worker and as a business entrepreneur. 'Moorooka (in Queensland) is my birthplace in Australia!'

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# Estonians

– *Written by Jaak Mardiste* –

Estonia is a Baltic nation of over one million people, south of Finland with Russia at its eastern border and Latvia to the south. It is culturally and linguistically related to Finland.

In 1918 Estonia became independent. A liberal democracy, it allowed all faiths and religions to have their own schools and churches. It remained independent until World War II, when it was invaded by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This caused 75,000 Estonians to be sent in cattle trains to the Gulags of Siberia. The World War II casualties of Estonia, estimated at around 25 per cent of the country's population, were among the highest in Europe.

When the Soviets invaded Estonia again in 1944, many people fled the country to escape death or deportation to Siberia by paying boat owners to take them to Sweden or Finland. Those who could not afford the payment escaped on larger supply vessels with the retreating German nationals to Germany. Our family was one of these who were looked after by the German Red Cross as we fled the advancing Soviets and ultimately found refuge in the Western Zones (British and American) of defeated Germany.

After the war, some twenty thousand Estonians were put for years into DP (Displaced Persons') camps in Germany, before being resettled in Uruguay, Canada, the United States or Australia. Being a Soviet satellite nation, Estonian farms were collectivised. For Estonia the Soviet years resulted in fifty years of stagnation and oppression. There was no freedom of speech and travel to the West was not permitted. When Gorbachev and Yeltsin dismantled the USSR in 1989, coinciding with the breaking down of the Berlin Wall, Estonia again declared its independence in 1991. The country has now joined North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and become a member of the European Union and the United Nations.

There were earlier settlers from Estonia who arrived in Australia during the 1920s. They are now called 'Old Estonians' who settled long ago in all capital cities. Some even arrived in Tsarist times by jumping ship in Sydney and Melbourne. The majority of Estonians in Australia now trace their arrival after 1949, when many ships brought thousands of European refugees to Australia. A former migrant remembers a comment made by a mainstream Australian when witnessing the

arrival of early post-war European refugees: "Geeze, they are just as white as us!" (1)

## Settlement in Queensland

Most migrant ships stopped at Fremantle and then sailed across the Great Australian Bight to Newcastle. On arrival people were sent to Greta camp in Maitland, New South Wales, some were then sent to other camps in New South Wales, but many were destined for the Wacol Migrant Camp on the outskirts of Brisbane. Estonian adults signed up to work for two years at a job allocated by immigration officials, and they were then expected to look after themselves. The government provided some English language classes for adults, although many people already spoke at least two languages and they were now required to learn another!

Even though life was hard, the new immigrants were thankful to be in a safe country where potatoes were sometimes more expensive than apples but butter was plentiful and children could go to school in bare feet! The 'Locals' were generally helpful towards the 'New Australians' and did make them welcome.

## Finding a new life

Many of the early post-war Estonian refugees were highly qualified professionals but these qualifications were not recognised or their language skills were insufficient, consequently most jobs were in labouring. An agricultural scientist would become a gardener, mowing grass for the city council. Many younger men worked at car assembly plants at Eagle Farm, others went ringbarking trees out west; some went to Mt Isa as the wages were higher using the lead bonus to offset the higher cost of living. Women worked at clothing sweat shops making men's trousers because it was necessary to get any type of job to survive and to feed the family. The children attended school and some had to put up with 'reffo' (from refugee) slurs. This soon disappeared as they became integrated into the school sporting teams and did well academically. Most people of Estonian origins ended up buying or building their own houses and becoming Australians, but they still remembered their homeland and established Estonian Societies in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The Estonian Society of Brisbane started in the 1950s and was centred on the Lutheran Church in Woolloongabba and where regular functions and celebrations were held. The Society provided a base of support to all ages, including Estonian language classes for children and catechism lessons for the older teens. The Estonian society participated in many multicultural events – folk dance groups, choirs and displays.

## The second generation

Though most of the ‘second generation’ was born overseas, they benefitted greatly from their parents’ efforts. The majority attended high school (not common in 1956 when even the police service only required a completed Grade 8) and trade schools and universities as Estonians were usually well educated and parents were supportive of higher education, so the children responded. The majority of Estonian children on our ship, *The Fair Sea*, arriving in August 1949, completed high school.

Another sign of the successful integration of Estonians into mainstream Australia is the marriages across ethnic and cultural ties. Celebrations of important feast days are held at homes and venues of both families as a result the children are shown both cultures and beliefs. Many children of the first generation hold significant jobs in industry – mining engineers, electrical engineers, professors, doctors, psychologists, etc.

## Since the end of the Soviet Union

After World War II, the Estonian borders were closed and leaving the country was impossible. A few did manage to escape, but everything changed in 1991 when Estonia became independent again. Estonia became a member of the international community again and people could travel to the West, although the country was financially impoverished after its years of oppression. Young people went to work in the United Kingdom and were earning more by picking strawberries than a psychology professor at a university in Estonia in 1993.

Australia and Estonia signed an agreement to allow young backpackers to come to Australia to work for up to two years, if they worked a substantial time on a farm. Over a thousand young Estonians are now arriving

annually to visit and to work. Cotton farmers in Bourke or banana packers in Mareeba would find it difficult to operate without backpackers – many from Estonia.

These younger travellers have it easier than their World War II relatives – they speak English. Most students learn several languages at school in Estonia – Estonian, English, German, Russian, Finnish, and some include French. In a small country where a million visitors arrive annually, it is important to speak the language of the tourists. A ‘check-out chick’ needs to converse in Estonian, Russian and Finnish and perhaps another one to get a job in the city!

The young people arriving now want to travel, have fun, and find a job at a farm, stay two years and some want to return to Estonia. Many have saved up some money to take back, but it is mainly the experience in living here that they relish. Many others want to stay.

## Staying in Australia

The young Estonians who want to stay are those who have trade and tertiary qualifications. They have done their farm work and now see many opportunities here and they are being sponsored by businesses because of their work skills and work ethic. Many are attending language schools to polish up on fluency. Others are studying at tertiary colleges to gain Australian certificates to go with their Estonian ones. They are integrating into the Australian society as well as with the ageing Estonian settlers from the early post-war era and their offspring.

## What now?

The Estonian Society of Brisbane currently has many members. The older ones from the 1950s migration wave are diminishing and a new group has embraced their endeavour. Many backpackers come and go, as do the visiting overseas relatives of local Estonians while professional musicians, actors and dramatists from Estonia bring their skills to Brisbane.

The society has been incorporated and meets on the first Sunday of every month at the Latvian House in Buranda. It supports newcomers and the older folk with the celebration of important cultural events and

gatherings. We are most grateful to our Latvian cousins in being able to use their premises as we are too few to finance our own base.

Estonia now has a full-time Consul in Sydney and Brisbane will again have its own Honorary Consul soon to take the place of the late Dr Will Tonnison.

Come and join us.

### References

- (1) Powerhouse Museum, Sydney: Migration Heritage Centre, Our new Home, Estonian – Australian Stories, quoting from the August Keskula Interview, 2005.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE

MARDISTE, Jaak was born in Parnu, Estonia. His mother and his three older siblings escaped by boat in 1944 as deportation was anticipated. His father escaped the Russian advance via Latvia. After four years in German Displaced Persons (DP) camps, the family arrived in Australia on the Fair Sea, August 1949. The Mardiste family settled on a 160 acre farm 11 km from Strathpine. Jaak attended Banyo SHS, Kedron Park Teachers' College and the University of Queensland. After marrying Helen and emigrating to Canada in 1968 they both taught in British Columbia. Jaak graduated from the University of British Columbia (B.Ed, M.Ed) and was a school principal for 10 years. They and two sons returned to Australia in 1986 where he taught science and then teacher education and professional development programs in Queensland and Victoria for eight years. Jaak is retired and he now builds and renovates houses and is the Treasurer of the Brisbane Estonian Society.

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# Ethiopians

– *Written by Tadewos Beyene and Seblework Tadesse* –

Ethiopia, with Addis Ababa its capital city, is a country of about 90 million people and has one of the most ancient histories in the world. It is one of the East African countries, situated in the Horn of Africa and has borders shared on the north and northeast by Eritrea, on the east by Djibouti and Somalia, on the south by Kenya, on the northwest by Sudan and on the southwest by South Sudan. Historically the country has had a different name, Abyssinia. Ethiopia consists of an area of 1.2 million sq. km. Ethiopia is home to the earliest humankind. Ethiopia and Ethiopians with a history and tradition of about 3,000 years, were able to repel the European colonial power advance during the scramble for Africa and uniquely survived as an independent country in the history of black Africa. The country is largely dependent on agriculture with approximately 85 per cent of its population living in rural areas and working on the land. Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic and culturally rich country, with over 80 ethnic groups speaking more than 100 languages.

Ethiopians have a fairly recent history in Australia with the first migrants arriving during the 1970s when the 'Derg' socialist government assumed power in Ethiopia. In the mid-1970s, the government of Haile Selassie was overthrown and a repressive regime was established, followed by years of internal wars for liberation and ethnic conflicts which forced a large number of Ethiopians to flee their country. Consequently, over half a million Ethiopians fled to neighbouring countries and waited in Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and Egypt before being accepted by Australia and other countries under refugee and humanitarian programs. In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front came to power yet Ethiopians continued to flee their country.

Since 1991, Queensland has become home to a considerable number of Ethiopian migrants, with 957 recorded in 2012 by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship – well below the number of Ethiopians present in Queensland estimated by community leaders and other sources of information. Most of these migrants and refugees in Queensland arrived under the Special Humanitarian Program or under the family reunion or spouse visa and adoption schemes. Very few Ethiopians entered Queensland as students and claimed asylum. Spatially, in Queensland, Ethiopians mostly live south and west of the Brisbane River, in areas such as Moorooka, Annerley, Yeronga, Yeerongpilly, Salisbury, Logan–Woodridge, Inala and Goodna. There

are also some Ethiopians living in North Brisbane. The geographic distributions and structure of settlement of Ethiopians in Queensland are largely based on relationships with family and friends, and religious affiliation. The majority of Ethiopian migrants and refugees who are living in Queensland are employed in manufacturing and related industries, taxi driving, cleaning, nursing homes and labouring; and some of them are employed in professional positions.

A few Ethiopian entrepreneurs started small businesses. The Ethiopian contribution to Queensland has been substantial. They work very hard to establish their families in the new country and they are determined to give their children the education which they themselves had been deprived of. Ethiopians see themselves as an integral part of Queensland's society and always aspire to contributing through their work and experience to a strong, cohesive, rich and prosperous multicultural Australia. They also care for their children's education and want them to achieve good outcomes in their studies. In addition to settling successfully in Queensland, Ethiopians are keen to support families and friends left behind in refugee camps overseas.

Like many other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Queensland, Ethiopians have faced numerous existing and emerging settlement-related challenges. The most acute challenges for Ethiopians in Queensland are in education, as most of them came from refugee camps where they have had no access to formal schooling. Therefore they are unable to read and write in their own language. This educational deficiency affects their learning of English, the key subject for educational and career progress. Furthermore, some of the educational, occupational and academic achievements gained back home are not recognised for employment purposes in Australia. Ethiopians experience considerable difficulties with finding jobs and there are also problems with underemployment and housing. In the areas where Ethiopians are living there is an acute shortage of affordable and appropriate housing. They also have a different orientation towards health services and they have difficulties when trying to obtain information pertaining to the health area. There is only limited access to interpreters. During their early settlement period Ethiopians tend to suffer from cultural shock: their acculturation to life in Queensland implies changes to the roles of husband and wife, new ways of parenting, intergenerational conflict and coping with a society practicing different family relationships. There are new

and additional issues Ethiopians need to address such as violence in the family and mental health problems.

In spite of all the challenges raised, Ethiopians in Queensland have settled in well and they are confident about their future in this state. They wish to interact at work and in private life with mainstream Australians and the members of the migrant communities. Ethiopians wish to host their traditional cultural celebrations such as their New Years festivities. They are also strongly inclined to practice their religions and they are establishing religious facilities so that their community members can strengthen their sense of belonging and security as they are living so far away from their homeland. Ethiopians in Queensland do not wish to live in social isolation as they like to participate in neighbourhood activities and in events such as multicultural festivals and in community consultations and forums. They have a particular interest in World Refugee Day.

Believing that they can make significant contributions towards maintaining and further advancing Australia's and Queensland's economic progress and social and political wellbeing, Ethiopians have established the Ethiopian Community Association of Queensland Inc., an umbrella organisation in which all Ethiopians work for the common interest of Ethiopians and Australians residing in Queensland. While the association shows much respect for people diversity and good Australian citizenship, it is also committed to promoting the identity of Ethiopians and their community in Queensland. The association aspires to working towards strengthening friendship, unity and personal links between Ethiopians and the wider community and to work with government at the three levels. Ethiopians want to work with governmental and non-governmental entities for the purpose of providing input towards shaping policies and practices towards improving the economic and social wellbeing of Ethiopians and other migrant communities. We want to participate in the life and work of this state and country and we also want to be recognised as partners and members of the Australian society as a whole. The Ethiopian Community Association of Queensland is not only concerned with organising social and cultural events and to encourage and promote achievements by Ethiopians in Queensland and Australia, its endeavour also includes volunteer contributions and relief work by our people when natural disasters and human-made disasters strike Ethiopia or Australia.

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## AUTHOR PROFILES

BEYENE, Tadewos was born and grew up in Ethiopia. His political involvement and participation in promoting human rights put him into an antagonistic position with his country's government inducing him to seek sanctuary in a neighbouring country. In May 2009, after arriving in Brisbane as a political refugee, he participated in the Work Placement Program run by the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) and joined this association as a fulltime employee. In 2011 he received a Masters of International Relations degree from the University of Queensland. He is the current President of the Ethiopian Community Association of Queensland. He also founded with his friends the Leadlife Associates, an association focusing on motivating and training young people for leadership. Tadewos is passionate about the role of leadership when a community's or an individual's vision needs translation into a tangible new project or development. He wishes to promote excellence and is keen to help people with achieving their purpose and potential.

TADESE, Seblework was born and grew up in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She was an audible voice standing up for democracy and human rights in Ethiopia and had to leave her country because her views diverged from the official policies and practices. After two years' exile in Uganda she arrived in Australia in 2009. She has worked for the Multicultural Development Association and for Inala Community Housing. Seblework has been involved with the Ethiopian community in Brisbane by working with the Women Leaders' Support Group. She is currently studying for degrees in Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Queensland. In 2011, Seblework became the secretary of the Ethiopian Community Association of Queensland. She is also a member of Amnesty International as issues of social justice are a top priority in her life. She is married and mother of a baby girl.

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