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Introduction

Australia is a nation that has been built on migration. Migration is the movement of people from one nation, place or location to another. Since 1788, people from many nations and cultures have come to Australia to make this land their home. But, many thousands of years before 1788, another wave of people came to Australia. These people are Australia's first inhabitants—the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Why People Migrate

People migrate for different reasons. Some people are forced to migrate because a natural disaster has destroyed their homes and their communities. When people in this situation migrate, they are doing so for environmental reasons. Some people are forced to leave their country because of war or because they are persecuted for their political or religious beliefs. These people are moving for political or religious reasons.

Many people move to another country for a better life or to be near family members who have moved. These people are moving for social reasons. Finally, other people move to a different country because they or their employer believes there are better career opportunities for them in that country. These people are moving for economic reasons.

Migration

Migration is either permanent or temporary—that is, people leave their home forever or for only a certain period of time. When a person leaves a country, he or she is said to be *emigrating*. When a person arrives in a country, he or she is said to be *immigrating*.

About This Book

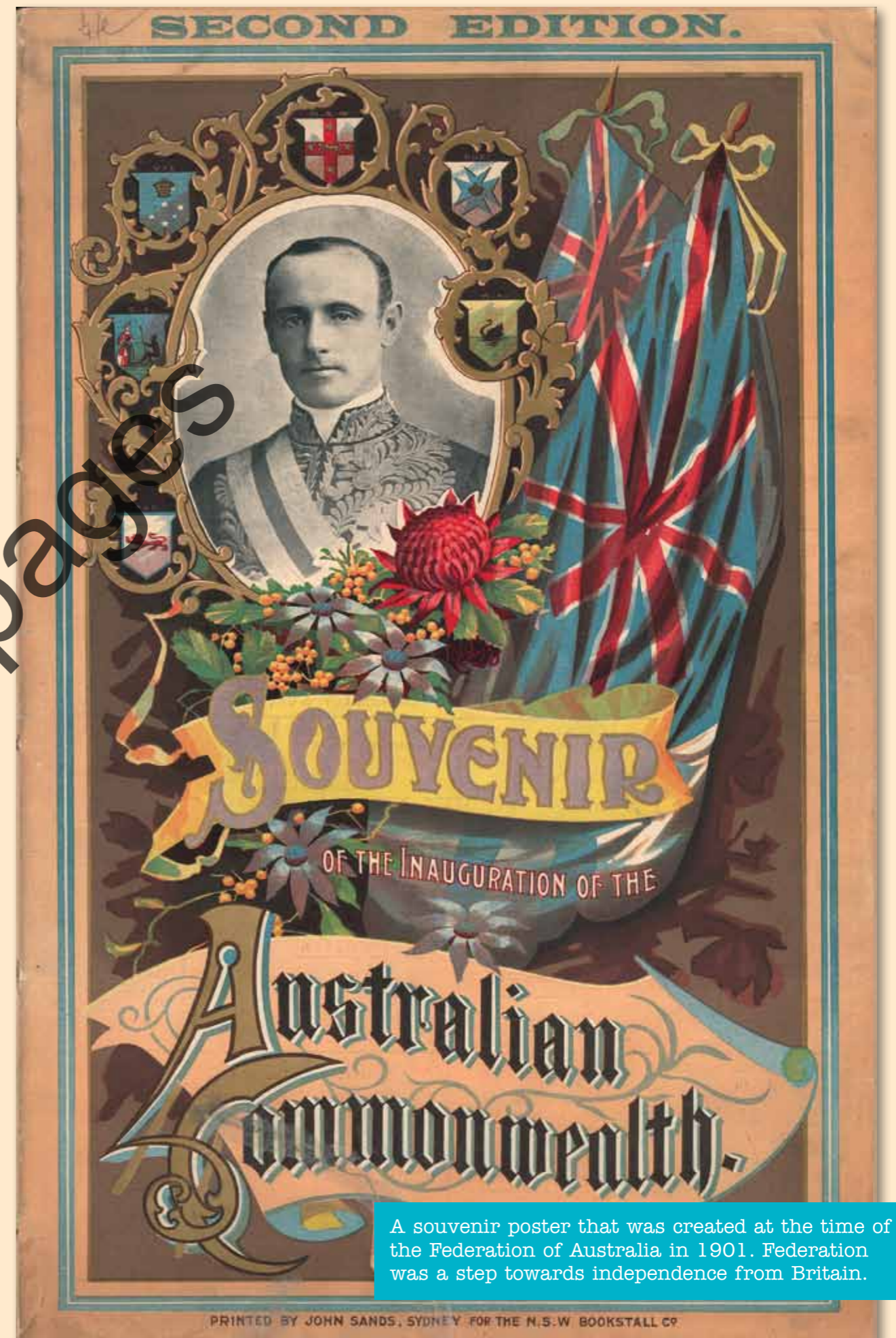
This book explores migration to Australia during the 20th century. In 1901, the Australian colonies united to become the Commonwealth of Australia. This was called Federation. Australia was still part of the British Empire, although it now had an Australian parliament.

Australia's immigration policies changed over the 20th century. In the early decades of the 1900s, immigration was all about increasing the nation's population. The government believed a larger population would improve the country's security and contribute to the development of the nation.

A new immigration policy came into effect in 1901. The government introduced the *Immigration Restriction Act*, which became known as the "White Australia Policy". This policy discriminated against non-Europeans, especially Asians, as the Australian government tried to keep the country of mostly European **descent**. Towards the end of the 20th century, Australia's immigration policy changed as multiculturalism was embraced.

Dictation Test

A **dictation** test was introduced under the *Immigration Restriction Act*. Applicants were required to pass a written test in a European language. The test was used to exclude people from non-European backgrounds, most of whom had no chance of passing a test that was not in their own language.



A souvenir poster that was created at the time of the Federation of Australia in 1901. Federation was a step towards independence from Britain.

Immigration Policies

The *Immigration Restriction Act* and racial discrimination dictated Australia's immigration policy for much of the first half of the 20th century. The Act placed severe restrictions on who could migrate to Australia and allowed for the removal of prohibited **immigrants**. The policies the Act brought in were based on racial discrimination. But people who were considered to be insane or a burden on the government, people with infectious or **contagious** diseases, and people of an undesirable character were also unable to migrate to Australia.

60-Year Policy

Non-European immigration was prohibited for over 60 years in Australia. The White Australia Policy grew out of Australians' fear of other races and their religions. A growing concern about being invaded added to people's fear. People also worried that non-European migrants would work for less money and thus would take jobs from European Australians.

Exclusion

On top of the White Australia Policy, the Australian government introduced a *Naturalisation Act*, which denied Asians and other non-Europeans the right to apply for **naturalisation**. Immigrants who had been **naturalised** under State Acts were given the same status and rights as other Australians. New applicants from Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands were refused naturalisation, except for New Zealanders.

Aboriginal Peoples

Non-European migrants were not the only people excluded in the White Australia Policy. Aboriginal peoples were still not regarded as worthy inhabitants in the early part of the 20th century and were not included in official statistics. It is estimated that there were around 95 000 Aboriginal peoples in 1900.

Aboriginal peoples were forced off their land onto reserves and missions where they were expected to live like European people and forget their own culture and traditions. It wasn't until 1962 that Aboriginal peoples were considered to be Australian citizens.

The British

Meanwhile, the Victorian government was keen to bring in more British immigrants. The government offered assistance schemes, like free or **subsidised** transport, through advertisements. Canada had placed restrictions on their immigration, so this encouraged more people to choose Australia as a place to migrate to. In Western Australia, the Group Settlement Scheme was introduced in the 1920s, which aimed to bring British people to the west to open up and settle new land for farming. The lure of free land enticed new settlers. The settlers were allotted around 100 hectares for wheat and dairy farming.

Origins

The origins of the White Australia Policy can be traced back to the 1850s, when European Australians resented the hard-working Chinese miners on the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales.



Australia was keen to populate the country, but only with the "right" sort of people.

World War I and the Great Depression

In the years before World War I, immigration boomed in Australia. But it came to a standstill during the war years—1914 to 1918. Then, after the war, the Australian government took control of immigration from the states. This meant they could decide who could or couldn't come to live in Australia, and the people they let in were mostly from Britain. But immigration came to another standstill when the Great **Depression** hit Australia in the 1930s.

Before World War I

Approximately 390 000 immigrants arrived in Australia between 1905 and 1914, mostly from Britain. The state governments set up advertising campaigns in Britain to attract migrants. There were posters, cinema advertisements, lectures and newspaper advertisements showing the benefits of immigrating to Australia. The scheme was highly successful, and 92 000 migrants arrived in just one year—1912.

But immigration declined during the war years because Australia was at war with Germany, so the government banned all German immigration. The government also passed the *War Precaution Act* in 1914, which saw several thousand migrants of German and Austrian origins **interned** as enemy "**aliens**". And the government toughened up the *Commonwealth Naturalisation Act* of 1903 because there was **antagonism** towards aliens or non-British people. Applicants for migration now had to give up their own nationality and be able to read and write English. This was impossible for many migrants already living in Australia.

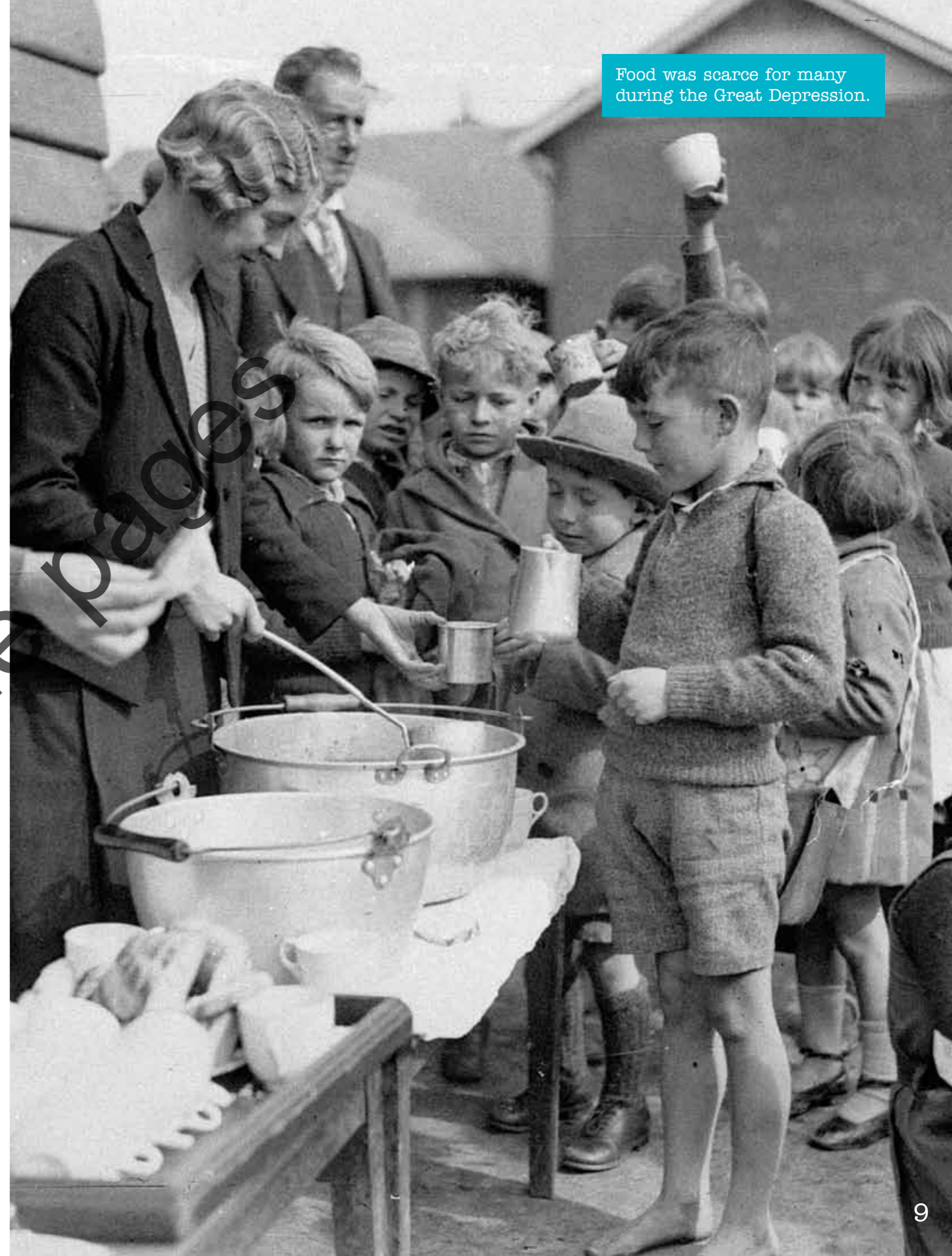
Migration Schemes

In 1921, the Australian government took over responsibility of immigration from the states and could now decide who could and couldn't immigrate to Australia, rather than the states **self-governing**. At this time, Australia was still keen to preserve its British identity. So, in 1922, a new immigration scheme between the Australian government and the state governments was introduced to attract British migrants. It was called the Empire Land Settlement Scheme. The British government and the Australian government helped people migrate to Australia by sharing the transport, monetary allowance, and training costs. The scheme also encouraged child and youth migration. Approximately 221 000 new settlers took up the scheme's offer between 1921 and 1929.

The Great Depression

Immigration came to a standstill again during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Australia could no longer afford to assist migrants, and people were not inclined to migrate because there were fewer work opportunities available. There was high unemployment in Australia during the Depression years, and many people struggled with the cost of living.

Food was scarce for many during the Great Depression.



Child Migrants

From the 1860s until the 1960s, more than 7000 British children from as young as three or four years of age were sent to Australia. Some children were orphans, but most came from families who could not afford to support them.

Charitable and Religious Organisations

Charitable and religious organisations conducted the child migration schemes. Many children put into the care of the organisations were sent to Australia without the consent of their parents. Most of the children were told they were orphans, even if it was not true. The children were expected to sever any ties with their homeland. The Australian government was in favour of the schemes and gave financial support to the organisations to help increase its population, particularly with British people. The British government saw it as a solution to neglected and homeless children.

Good for Some, Not for Others

The children were shipped to Australia on their own, with no family or people to care for them. Coming to an unknown land with an uncertain future was a terrifying prospect. Many of the children had never been to a city or even seen the ocean. The children were given medical examinations, intelligence tests and a trunk or suitcase filled with clothes from the organisation that sent them.

Some of the children were happy and led productive and full lives in their new country, while others were homesick. Some child migrants suffered abuse at the hands of people who were meant to be looking after them.

Arrival

When the children arrived in Australia, the boys were trained to be farmers or labourers and the girls were trained to be **domestic servants**. The children were sent to religious institutions or farm-training schools. They worked long hours and received harsh punishments for disobedience.

In 1913, Fairbridge Farm School was established in Western Australia. Kingsley Fairbridge had a vision for rescuing children in need and training them with skills for the future. The first 13 children arrived at the farm in 1913. A few more farms were established throughout the country until the scheme finished in 1973.

Youth Migration

The Dreadnought Trust was introduced in 1911 to bring young British teenagers to New South Wales to work on the land. Boys aged from 15 to 19 years old, mostly from urban areas, made their own decisions to immigrate. During World War II, Polish Jewish boys arrived, and after the war boys came from Malta.

Formal Apologies

In 2009 and 2010, the Australian and the British governments issued formal apologies to the child migrants who had been abused.

Girls were trained as domestic servants.

