

# Section M

Macedonians .....	<b>265</b>
Malawians .....	<b>269</b>
Malaysians .....	<b>270</b>
Maltese .....	<b>274</b>
Manx .....	<b>276</b>
Maoris .....	<b>278</b>
Mauritians .....	<b>281</b>
Mexicans .....	<b>284</b>
Moldovans .....	<b>286</b>
Mongolians .....	<b>287</b>
Montenegrins .....	<b>289</b>
Mozambicans .....	<b>291</b>
Myanmar people (Burmese) .....	<b>292</b>

## **DISCLAIMER**

*The information contained in We Are Queenslanders does not represent the official position, policy or opinion of the State of Queensland (acting through DATSIMA). The accuracy of any historical, social or political information contained in the book is not affirmed by the Queensland Government.*

*Queensland is filled with a richness and diversity of cultures which we acknowledge and celebrate, and recognise as a result of our long history of migration – this publication was developed with the sole intention of disseminating information for the benefit of the public and promoting the diverse immigration stories and experiences that are an important part of Queensland history.*

*While every care has been taken in preparing this material, the State of Queensland (acting through DATSIMA) will not be held responsible in any way whatsoever for We Are Queenslanders, or for any misinterpretation or misunderstanding of any of the data, information, statements or advice, express or implied, provided in the book.*



# Macedonians

– Written by Trajce Cvetkovski –

## Where we came from

Macedonia is a tiny landlocked country in the Balkans with a population of just over two million, and a land area of just over 25,000 sq. km. It experiences warm, dry summers, but the winters can be quite cold, often with heavy snowfalls. Its geography is generally described as mountainous with deep valleys and freshwater lakes. Macedonia is surrounded by Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania. A multicultural nation, where Macedonian, a Slav dialect, is predominantly spoken, Christian Orthodoxy is the main religion. The fact that Macedonia is firmly embedded in the Balkans alone suggests it has always been, irretrievably, a site of struggle – a struggle to retain its identity, history, culture, but most importantly, its name.

‘Where we came from’ and ‘What’s in a name?’ are two interconnected issues concerning Macedonians which can never be easily answered. Indeed, Danish film maker Sigurjon Einarsson’s informative documentary *A Name is a Name: A Film about a Nation Held Hostage because of its Name* (2009) perfectly portrays the current political struggle the Republic of Macedonia has been forced to endure since its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991.

Confusion about Macedonia’s identity exists, but some facts are irrefutable. When two brothers, Saints Methodius and Cyril created the Cyrillic alphabet in the 860s, they clearly relied on the ‘Macedonian Slav dialect’ to translate the Holy Scriptures for Orthodox Christians. They recognised Macedonia as a Cradle of Slav Orthodox Culture. The dialect of the Macedonian Slavs was thus promoted to be a literary language. As this important cultural and linguistic development is seldom acknowledged internationally, there must be a certain level of irony in the 21st century in that Macedonians were the first Slavs to create a written Slavic language, but now remain the last of a nation of predominately Slavs to be recognised because of their name. The struggle, it seems is ongoing, and so questions about ancestry continue to remain unanswered.

The August Ilinden Uprising of 1903 against colonial Ottoman Turks best symbolises the desire to preserve this Christian Orthodox Slav identity. But Macedonia’s precarious neighbours possess quite different views about what ‘Macedonia’ is and is not. The paradox in such divergent and contradictory views is that they all cannot be correct because they all disagree with one

another. Non-Macedonian ideas about Macedonia simply confirm the political artificial prism in which non-Macedonian attitudes are viewed.

As such, the struggle for independence, freedom and recognition is deeply ingrained in Macedonians, and this might explain why over the past 11 decades, many Macedonians have left to make a better life for themselves abroad. Australia and the rest of the Western world have benefited from such migration. Queensland has also been fortunate in that over the past few decades a significant group of hardworking and intelligent citizens with firm moral and religious conviction have peacefully settled here. ‘Where we came from’ thus is a uniquely Macedonian experience best told by those who have struggled to retain their portion of the Balkans despite overt oppression.

## Early settlement

### First stage – young male Pechalbari (1900s to 1950s)

Hardship has always been a part of Macedonians’ DNA. The devastation left by the Balkan crisis during the early years of the 20th century forced young Macedonians to seek financial opportunities abroad. The Macedonian term ‘pechalba’ is used to describe the desire to earn money with a view to return with new-found wealth; or at least send some money back to family members. Often, wholesale villages would effectively be deserted as young men set off to find work. Durham reflects on the Pechalbari during the Balkan crises of the early 20th century where power vacuums in Macedonia created fertile conditions for lawlessness and anarchy. Many of these economic migrants emigrated to America and Australia for survival, and despite the romantic and nostalgic desire to return to the old country (‘stari kraj’), a great deal did not return.

This period of outrageously violent upheaval in Macedonia in the late 1800s and early 1900s is depicted in the neo-Western genre film *Dust* (2002) by Macedonian film maker Milcho Manchevski. In this movie, internationally acclaimed Australian actor David Wenham plays a superb role as a gun-toting American cowboy in search of his illegal fortune and malevolent misadventure in Macedonia. Dubbed the ‘Wild, Wild East’ it was a time of anarchy and lawlessness.

Waves of turmoil in the Balkans throughout subsequent decades ensured further migratory trickles. Not surprisingly, Macedonians continued to depart for Canada, Australia, Sweden and America. During their search for prosperity, peace and stability a small number of Pechalbari made their way to Queensland.

Whilst there is some evidence of young male Macedonians travelling to Australia in the late 1800s and early 1900s, there is no reliable data on early settlement in Queensland. However, given the Macedonian-born population in Queensland represents less than three per cent of all Macedonian-born persons in Australia, it is more than likely there was never any significant history of Macedonian migration in Queensland a century ago. Ilievski (2001) estimates 'about 50 people' by 1924, and anecdotal stories of young Macedonians settling throughout fertile pockets of Queensland exist. The early Pechalbari predominantly settled in Victoria and New South Wales which combined now comprise nearly 90 per cent of all Macedonian persons in Australia. During this period, ripples of displaced persons including orphans were permitted to repatriate – but most of these people settled in the already established communities of the southern states.

Given the tyrannical distance between the Balkans and Australia, it is highly likely young Macedonian males never expressed a desire to return with the spoils of their hard labour, and settled in the fertile agricultural regions given the agrarian nature of the Macedonian peasantry and the proximate climatic conditions for growing various traditional produce including bananas, cotton and tobacco. Over time, these young men arranged for the arrival of suitable brides from the stari kraj thereby establishing pathways for the subsequent wave of Macedonian migration.

## **Second stage – Macedonian workers and families (1960s to 1980s)**

Australia experienced significant waves of modern economic migrants from Macedonia from the 1960s to 1980s. Those Macedonian migrants, most of whom arrived as nuclear family units, however did not engage in agriculture. Rather, they contributed to building Australia's manufacturing base and overall infrastructure. These Macedonians might still be described as modern Pechalbari of sorts given the economic basis for migration. However the bulk

settled in New South Wales and Victoria thereby establishing prominent Macedonian communities in the southern states, and with minimal interstate migration. But a strong concentration of Macedonians in the southern Eastern states does not detract from the fact Macedonians in Queensland thrived as a small but effective multicultural community – notwithstanding the fact probably only about 5–10 per cent of all Macedonians emigrating to Australia decided to make Queensland their home. It must not be forgotten most Macedonians arrived in Australia as 'Yugoslavs' for legal and administrative purposes.

## **Recent migratory trends in the past fifteen years**

### **Third stage – post Yugoslav migration**

Given the opaque history Macedonians have been forced to endure, it is difficult to empirically determine just how many Macedonians now live abroad let alone in Queensland. Markiewicz is probably the most accurate and states, 'Public statistics are incomplete and only indirect estimations are available. IMF (2006) states that rough estimations give the figure of ½ million of Macedonians living abroad – it would represent approximately 20–25 per cent of population' (2006: 4). Australia, however, has its lion's share of Macedonians living abroad. It is safe to estimate that in excess of 93,000 persons are identified as Macedonians who currently live in Australia.

In the light of ongoing troubles in the Balkans, it is not surprising to learn that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) reported Macedonian 'Humanitarian' migration ranked fourth (5,146 or a proportion of 6.7 per cent) for the year 2006. Interestingly, Croatian migrants admitted on humanitarian grounds were 2,506 (ranked sixth at 3.3 per cent). Macedonia and Croatia of course were part of the former Yugoslavia. However, what must be stressed is that there is a sizeable difference in the intake of displaced persons from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan and these two Balkan nations. The former three are generally associated with off-shore or detention centre-related publicity and policy whereas Macedonians were granted visas on humanitarian grounds on-shore generally because prospects of immediate integration into a well-established community were clearly evident. Despite the overriding philosophy of accepting people on humanitarian

grounds, factors such as English proficiency, education, a connection with established Macedonian Australians, skills and other noteworthy features no doubt have assisted recent Macedonian migrants who have decided to make Australia their home.

But what is surprising is the fact that ‘the latest census in 2006 recorded 40,660 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-born people in Australia, a decrease of 6.5 per cent from the 2001 census’ (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This supports the observation that the bulk of Macedonians in Australia arrived prior to 1996 (nearly 86 per cent), with only just over five per cent arriving in the subsequent five year period and a drop to 4.4 per cent in the most recent census data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This data suggest the intake is incremental, but overall trends in the past 15 years remain inconclusive given the dip in the preceding census.

Not surprisingly however, most recent Macedonians settled in the two largest southern states. These recent developments support one important fact in that the status quo has been preserved as Macedonians prefer to remain in larger established communities with negligible intrastate migration. This fact is historically and geographically grounded. Those Pechalbari from specific regions in Macedonia, and the second wave of family migration on economic grounds who settled in Australia have acted as ambassadors for other Macedonians who have intended to emigrate in areas with large established community networks. It has been relatively easy therefore for Macedonians in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. On that note, Western Australia which is less than half of Queensland’s overall population boasts some eight per cent of the Macedonian population in Australia. The sense of community established in those states is therefore quite easy to measure.

It is remarkable that a handful of Queensland Macedonians – the fourth largest population of Macedonians where the population of Macedonian-born is less than 1000 (and perhaps with another 500 claiming ancestry), who predominately reside in Brisbane (up to 80 per cent) and the Gold Coast (20 per cent) have been able to establish a well-defined community that is committed to preserving Macedonian history, customs and practices. These figures are at the more generous end, and have not

significantly changed in the last 10 years. If anything a decrease in the Queensland Macedonian population suggests interstate migration. What undeniably separates Queensland Macedonians from other Australian Macedonians is the impact a small but tight community can make.

## Integration and participation and community associations

### Queensland Macedonians in the 21st century

At the epicentre of the Macedonian universe is the Orthodox Church. It binds Macedonian tradition, culture attitudes and of course beliefs. The first Queensland Macedonian Orthodox centre, Brisbane’s Macedonian Orthodox Church ‘Holy Mother of God’ (1982), and the recently established Gold Coast church at Gaven, ‘Saint Sunday’ (2000) reinforce a strong status quo of norms and practices which have remained intact for several centuries. Indeed, the fact that over 30 Macedonian parish churches, monasteries and Orthodox centres have been established in Australia is most noteworthy vis-à-vis overall population.

In Queensland, the founding members of St Mary’s, most of whom, are still active in church affairs will keenly attest to their pechalbiric contributions for the purchase of the church which is situated on corner of James and Annie in New Farm. The parishioners essentially are the community members in Queensland. Suffice to say, the churches are the cradle of Queensland Macedonian culture. They are jealously guarded by the parishioners, and any challenge has always been met with fierce community resistance in order to preserve Macedonian heritage.

On that note, Ilinden is celebrated at the front of the New Farm church where local residents generously consent to have Annie Street blocked off so that Queenslanders are able to participate in Macedonian food, song and dance by way of a street party. That a small community can attract an equal number of Macedonian and non-Macedonian attendees is testimony to the fact the community is well integrated into the Queensland way of life.

This is nothing extraordinary given the Macedonian communities' extensive involvement in multicultural activities in the past. The community was always a feature of the Brisbane Warana festival (1961–1996). Members of the Brisbane dance groups 'Kitka' and 'Tanec' regularly performed around Brisbane but have since retired. 'Makedonsko Oro Brisbane' now carries the fine tradition of dance and song. This group regularly performs at multicultural festivals in Queensland including Kaleidoscope. Elementary Macedonian is also taught in the church grounds in the youth cafe. The club house next door acts as the main hall where official meetings, forums, debate and community events are held.

The 'Brothers United' soccer club no longer competes, however reconstitution of a new team at the Macedonian grounds on Brisbane's south side has not been ruled out.

## The future

One redeeming feature which has emerged from the Pechalbari is that the fine tradition of hard work has translated into greater opportunities for their children in Queensland. These things are taken for granted in the southern states because so many successful Macedonians have already made their mark. Queensland's circle of successful Macedonian entrepreneurs, professionals, artists, musicians and sportspeople has incrementally widened along with the rise of Macedonian cultural identity. Furthermore, Macedonians also continue to integrate with the dominant Anglo-Celtic Queensland population as more marry non-Macedonians – a fact statistically corroborated by church records. None of this should be surprising to Queenslanders. The French have a term used to personify the ongoing dialectical mixture of ethnic groups – 'Macédoine'. Macedonia's contribution to Queensland's rich and complex human geography should not go unnoticed.

## References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) 3416.0 - Perspectives on Migrants, [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au) accessed 30/11/2012
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Community Information Summary – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-born, AGPS: Canberra
- Einarsson, S (2009) A Name is a Name: A Film about a Nation Held Hostage because of its Name Producer, With Macedonia Foundation
- Ilievski, G (2001) 'Macedonians' in Brändle, ed, *Multicultural Queensland*, ECCQ/QMWA: Brisbane
- Macedonian Human Rights '2011 Australian Census data: Almost 100,000 Macedonians in Australia', [www.macedoniahr.org.au](http://www.macedoniahr.org.au), accessed 20/12/2012
- Manchevski, M (2002) *Dust*, Distributor (Australia), Madman
- Markiewicz, M (2006) *Migration and Remittances in Macedonia*, Center for Economic Analyses, CEA: Skopje
- Van Seim, J 'Macedonia: At a Quiet Crossroads', *Migration Information Source*, MPI, [www.migrationinformation.org](http://www.migrationinformation.org) accessed, 2/12/2012.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

CVETKOVSKI, Trajce has a PhD from the University of Queensland and is a practicing Queensland Barrister. He is also an academic at the University of Queensland, and author of *Copyright and Popular Media: Liberal Villains and Technological Change* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Born in Macedonia's capital Skopje, Trajce migrated to Brisbane on 28 February 1973 with his parents and sister, Valentina (who is also a Barrister) at the age of four. Apart from two years in England where he practiced as a solicitor, Trajce, his wife and two children (one of whom is currently Australia's youngest speed rock climbing champion), continue to make Queensland their home.

---

# Malawians

– Written by Gerald Nyasulu –

Malawi is the warm heart of Africa. Sitting between Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia is a landlocked small country originally known as Nyasaland but changed to Malawi (Flames of Fire) after ousting its British colonial masters in 1964. Malawi has a fresh water lake called Lake Malawi which boasts pristine and golden sand beaches which are perfect for snorkelling. Lake Malawi has the largest number of fish species in one lake in the entire world. Therefore, I would bet you that you haven't been to Africa yet until you visit Malawi.

The greatest treasure for Malawi though is its people. One distinctive feature on the faces of Malawians will be their infectious smile! Enjoying a laid back easy going life style, Malawians are very friendly and enjoy hospitality. While the outside world is bombarded with images of the Serengeti, Malawi has a rich and diverse fauna. Malawi boasts of five National Parks and four game reserves where you can see wild animals in large numbers. There are several languages spoken in Malawi but the major ones are Chichewa, also designated as the national language, Tumbuka and Yao. The official language though is English which makes life easier for everybody. Malawi's population is estimated at 16.3 million.

As you will notice, it's a rare privilege to meet a Malawian in Australia and elsewhere because although Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, it is a land of opportunities. Malawians love staying and living in Malawi and only few of us have migrating abroad. For instance, there are only two Malawian families in Townsville with four and five members each respectively, and only one student studying at James Cook University. Malawians are peace loving people and have never experienced a civil war. Malawi has relatively strong democratic institutions which saw the first female president sworn in just over a year ago.

Living in Australia, particularly by settling in Townsville, has been a huge sea change for us. I always get this remark regardless of who I am talking to "You must be feeling pretty good, eh?" This of course is meant with reference to North Queensland's heat and the humidity. When I respond saying "Not really, this place is hotter than Malawi", there is always an awkward silence that ensues. The assumption is always that Africa must be some boiling cauldron. Well, it depends on which part of Africa you are referring to.

Nonetheless, we are now used to the humidity and the heat in Queensland. Here, at the slightest change to lower temperatures it doesn't take long before we bring out our jumpers.

It took us quite a long time to realise that most of the foods we can access in Malawi are available here in Asian shops or the local Sunday markets. That was a huge relief. You never know how much you get used to eating particular kinds of foods until you have travelled elsewhere. I have come to a deep realisation that food is what your mother taught you. With these foods now available, it feels like home. It feels friendly and we feel a sense of belonging. We feel very fortunate to have the best of both worlds. With the growing African community in Townsville, we feel we are a part of a multicultural Queensland. The differences between people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are becoming more and more blurred while the oneness is becoming brighter by the day.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

NYASULU, Gerald is the first-born in a family of eight and was born in 1974 in Dedza, which is in the Central Region of Malawi. He travelled extensively around Malawi with his parents who were both government employees. He migrated to Australia in 2004 and settled in Townsville. Gerald completed a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from the University of Malawi and a PhD degree in the field of social policy which was conferred by the James Cook University in Queensland. His area of specialisation is poverty eradication and human rights. Gerald is married to Ulemu and they have two sons.

---

# Malaysians

– *Written by Tan Teng Hee* –

Malaysia is a federation of eleven states in Peninsular Malaysia and two states in East Malaysia (Malaysia Borneo). With a long colonial history under British rule, Malaya achieved independence from the British in 1957. Malaysia was formed in 1963 with the inclusion of Singapore to its south and Sabah (previously British North Borneo) and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. Singapore subsequently withdrew and became an independent nation in its own right. Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy, based on a unique rotating system in which the Sultans of the various states take turns every five years to be the King. At the same time it operates as a parliamentary democracy broadly based on the British model. It is 329,847 sq. km in size and has a tropical climate. Natural resources include tin, petroleum, timber, copper, iron ore, natural gas and bauxite.

Its population of 28.7 million consists of a multi-racial and multi-cultural mix of Malays (majority population), Chinese, Indians and the Indigenous peoples, many of whom still live a traditional lifestyle in the more remote areas of the country. Malaysia is one of the most modern and prosperous countries in South East Asia with an export-based economy.

While Bahasa Malaysia is the official language, English continues to be widely used in commerce, education and everyday communication. Other languages such as Chinese dialects, Mandarin and Indian dialects are also spoken. The various races and cultures inter-mingle freely but sensitively and respectfully despite political, economic and social issues that tend to divide and polarise. While the Malay, Chinese, Indian and Indigenous cultures remain unique, they have evolved and blended into a rich tapestry of colour, music and food when they come together as the Malaysian cultural experience.

## Australia – Malaysia relations

Australia and Malaysia have maintained a stable bilateral relationship despite some short-term tensions that occur from time to time. Overall it is an excellent relationship with Malaysia having long-standing ties with Australia through defence, trade, education and migration. Thousands of Malaysians have been educated in Australian education institutions

and continue to do so. In 2011, 15,000 Malaysian international students were studying in Australia, mostly in higher education institutions. This represents the fifth largest group of international students in Australia.

Many older Australians are familiar with Malaysia through their participation in the defence of the then Malaya during World War II and the Emergency and again later in the defence of Malaysia during the 'Confrontation' with Indonesia. The RAAF base at Butterworth was home to Australian service personnel and their families for many years. Today, Australians and Malaysians enjoy each other's respective countries through tourism, business, education and family ties.

## Malaysian migration

The following information is extracted from the Malaysia Country Profile published by the (former) Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship and provides some interesting statistics about Malaysians in Australia:

'At the end of June 2010, 135,610 Malaysia-born people were living in Australia, 47 per cent more than was reported in the August 2006 Census of Population and Housing. This makes it the ninth largest migrant community in Australia – equivalent to 2.3 per cent of Australia's overseas born population and 0.6 per cent of Australia's total population.

For Australia's Malaysian-born migrants:

- Their median age of 36.9 years was in line with the general population.
- Females slightly outnumbered males – 53 per cent compared with 47 per cent.
- At November 2011, their labour force participation rate of 64 per cent was slightly lower than the national rate of around 65 per cent.
- The unemployment rate at November 2011 was 4.4 per cent – this was lower than the national rate of 5.2 per cent.
- In November 2011, 72,000 Malaysia-born people were working in Australia. Of these, managers and professionals made up more than half of all workers (52 per cent).

Table 1: Distribution of Malaysians by geographical area of residence

	Geographical Area	No. of persons	Percentage
1	Brisbane – East	325	2.54%
2	Brisbane – North	661	5.17%
3	Brisbane – South	3206	25.07%
4	Brisbane – West	1821	14.24%
5	Brisbane – Inner City	1367	10.67%
6	Rest of Queensland	5410	42.31%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12790</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above statistics for Malaysians in Queensland are drawn from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Table 1 shows the distribution of Malaysian-born people residing in the major suburban areas of greater Brisbane compared with the rest of Queensland. Not surprisingly, the highest concentration in the Brisbane area is in the south where the suburbs such as Sunnybank, Runcorn, Eight Mile Plains, Calamvale, Macgregor and Robertson are home to a large Asian population and the shopping centres, restaurants and other facilities cater quite comprehensively to Asian needs and tastes. However, compared to other overseas-born people settled in Queensland they do not form a significant proportion of the total overseas-born pool.

According to the Queensland Multicultural Policy 2011, Malaysia is among the top 20 countries for skilled migrants arriving in Queensland in 2009–2010. This is due to immigration policies placing a strong emphasis on skills and the ability of the Malaysian skilled professionals to emigrate confidently and apply their skills in the new country. While the majority succeed in continuing their professional and other skilled employment in Australia, not all are able to do so. The latter have to be more flexible and opt for other employment or business opportunities.

Overseas migration of Malaysians—largely ethnic Chinese—has been mainly driven by the erosion of education and other opportunities in their home country, rather than violent conflict or significant economic stress. Many left behind established families, promising careers, thriving businesses and enviable lifestyles to pursue a more secure, equitable social environment and politically stable future for their children. Migration is often beset with conflicting

emotions. Patriotism and love of the old country versus the promise of a better future; filial ties versus commitment to a new generation; exchanging stability for uncertainty, financial security versus risk and so on. However, courage, perseverance and resilience are qualities that make successful migrants and like their forebears who left China, India and other mother countries, Malaysian migrants have taken their physical and emotional journeys one step further in order to advance and prosper in a new land.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that one of the primary reasons for the choice of Queensland (and Brisbane in particular) as a place of settlement is the climate. For Malaysians living in the harsh tropical climate in Malaysia, the gentle sub-tropical climate of south-east Queensland is very comfortable and benign. Sydney and Melbourne present bigger city experiences and greater employment and business opportunities but do come at a price – the cost of living. Queensland presents a more gentle, affordable and yet enriching and promising new home. The growth and development of Queensland and Brisbane over the last 20–30 years have proven that this choice is well-founded and bodes well for future settlement of expatriate Malaysians looking for an enviable lifestyle in a vibrant society.

## Life in Queensland

One of the key advantages in favour of Malaysians settling in Australia and Queensland is their ability in written and spoken English which not only eases the complexities of settling in a foreign country but also enhances employment and business opportunities. Many have found meaningful and rewarding careers in the private and public sectors, while others have found success in business enterprises, ranging from small

to large corporate ventures. Some have continued their business involvement in Malaysia and other countries and thus commute overseas regularly.

Despite their presence and success in various fields, Malaysians in Queensland have generally kept a low profile. This is quite characteristic. Being mostly ethnic Chinese with a long history of settlement in Malaysia, they have brought with them their native industriousness and their desire to be quiet achievers. Unlike other migrant groups they have not congregated in any particular suburb in great numbers but spread themselves across many suburbs. In Brisbane, the southern suburbs of Sunnybank, Eight Mile Plains, Calamvale and Runcorn are popular, while the western suburbs of Chapel Hill, Kenmore and Mount Ommaney are also popular. They have also not been very publicly vocal or strident in expressing their views, with the result that as a community they remain largely indistinguishable from the larger Asian presence. Is this attitude in their best interest given the lessons of history? Perhaps not. However, this is something the community must individually and collectively ponder and decide.

Coming from a culturally diverse country like Malaysia, most Malaysian migrants are quite familiar with the various aspects of Chinese, Indian and Malay or Muslim cultural traditions, in addition to the Western cultural traditions and celebrations. Being predominantly Chinese by ethnicity, Malaysians in Queensland celebrate Chinese New Year, as well as other Australian festive occasions like Christmas and New Year. At the same time they enjoy other cultural events like Eid (or Hari Raya in Malaysia), Deepavali and the festivals of other ethnic communities, like the Greeks and Italians.

Malaysians' love for Asian and Western food is the focal point of most community socialising and family gatherings. Malaysian food has joined the ranks of other cuisines in Australia and popular Malaysian dishes like laksa, nasi goreng, nasi lemak, char kwayteow and satay can be found in a range of Malaysian restaurants. More importantly the ingredients and fresh produce to prepare Malaysian-style dishes are easily available and Malaysians no longer have to rely on their trips to Malaysia to enjoy their favourite foods. Even fruits like durian (*Durio zibethinus*), mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana*), papaya (*Carica Papaya*), rambutan (*Nephelium Lappaceum L*) and starfruit (*Averrhoa Carambola*) have become available.

While Malaysians in Australia enjoy watching sports like football, cricket, surfing and motor racing, their favourite sports remain badminton, table tennis, golf, tennis and soccer. Fishing and the great outdoors are also popular. The great Aussie barbecue has also been well-adopted with Malaysian variations introduced. Generally Malaysians have eased comfortably into the Aussie lifestyle once they have overcome the initial culture shock of moving from the bustling population centres of Malaysia to the relatively more sedate Australian suburbs and towns. Malaysians are also great travellers and few social occasions are without tales of travels to Malaysia and other overseas countries. Most have families back in the home country and elderly parents account for much of the travel home in the early years of migration.

As a community, Malaysians participate in various religious and community organisations but also have their own organisation. The Malaysia Club of Queensland Inc. is a community organisation that provides a social and networking facility for the local Malaysian community, as well as newly arrived migrants. It is also a focal point for any government consultation on relevant issues and provides an information channel on community matters as well as a voice to express their views on issues of relevance to the Malaysian community.

## Contribution to Queensland

The presence of the Malaysian community in Queensland has certainly enriched the complex multi-cultural heart of the broader community. This enrichment has occurred through inter-personal relationships, business, tourism, food, cultural awareness and education. Many Malaysians work successfully in the Federal and State public service, as well as the private sector and run successful businesses of their own. For example in Queensland Health, there are many Malaysian doctors and other medical specialists who have distinguished themselves. Others work as nurses and in other clinical, administrative and management roles. As an example, Dr Ann Bernadette Chang is a respected paediatric respiratory specialist. The author of this chapter developed the Queensland Government's Maintenance Management Framework which was approved by Cabinet on 28 June 1999. The Framework is a policy that drives the maintenance of all Queensland Government buildings such as schools and hospitals. Another Malaysian, Mokhtiar Singh, was the

first Sikh police officer in Queensland and Australia. He was the first to be allowed to wear the traditional Sikh turban as official headgear for a police officer.

Two Malaysian entrepreneurs who have made Queensland's Top 150 Rich List 2012 are Sam Chong (mining) and Mahalingam Sinnathamby (property development). Other Malaysians have pursued successful careers in academia and work in various Queensland universities. Another Malaysian, Tan Choe Lam is the founder of the first aged care and retirement facility in Australia based on Asian values.

## The future

The 'baby boomers' generation of Malaysian migrants have established themselves quietly into life in Queensland and generally prospered and become respected members of society. However, the extent to which their lives and participation in mainstream Australia have grown in terms of public profile, political influence, representation at the higher levels of government, economic strength and social assimilation is probably not very significant. This could be due to factors related to population size, geographical spread of settlement, lack of a 'burning issue' as a unifying force and a natural and understandable tendency to focus on settlement, career and family as a priority. It is certainly not due to any lack of talent or passion.

The second generation, with the benefit of Australian education and social networks rooted in the playing fields and classrooms of local schools and universities are much better positioned to take a greater interest and pro-active role in making further headway into mainstream Australia and raise the profile of Malaysians in Australia. Whether they will do so is less certain. This brings into focus a broader issue; that of the wider Chinese diaspora in Australia. Given that the large majority of Malaysians in Queensland and Australia generally are ethnic Chinese the question is how the Malaysian-born Chinese will align with Chinese from other countries to contribute to and benefit from the wider agenda of Chinese Australians aspiring to a more prominent and influential role in mainstream Australia.

As noted above, Malaysian migrants so far, have been pre-dominantly ethnic Chinese with some Malaysian Indians, Eurasians and Malays. Is this pattern likely to

continue? With globalisation and the ever-changing political, economic and social scenarios in Malaysia and elsewhere, it is likely that there will be increased migration of non-Chinese Malaysians. The future migrants may also very likely include greater numbers of single people, such as Malaysian students who elect to seek residency after their studies here. Globalisation may also lead to the children of Malaysian migrants leaving Australia to seek their fortunes in places like Europe, China, Singapore and the US. The next few decades will probably see in a significant change in the demographics of the Malaysian community in Queensland as the baby boomers age and a younger generation takes its place.

The ageing of the 'baby boomers' generation of migrants also brings into focus the challenges of access to culturally appropriate aged care. The government's shift towards ageing may alleviate this to some extent, but the comfortable fit of this scenario with Malaysian Australians is yet to be discovered. Nevertheless, the continuum of migration, settlement, integration and ultimately ageing in place in Australia is a reality of life for Malaysian Australians who have chosen to adopt Australia as their home. The journey was, is and will be challenging but with courage, perseverance and characteristic adaptability and resilience, Malaysians will continue to seek a better life and prosper in Australia.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

TAN TENG HEE is a Malaysian Australian who migrated to Australia with his family in 1983. An electrical engineer by profession, he served many years in the Queensland Public Sector in the area of asset and facilities management, retiring in 2009 from the position of Director, Asset Management Unit in Queensland Health. He has presented at many conferences as well as working as a visiting lecturer at a university in Hong Kong. Currently he is also a non-executive director of a leading aged care and retirement resort in Brisbane. A strong believer in community representation, he has been active for many years in the Malaysia Club of Queensland, a community organization for expatriate Malaysians. He was the editor of its newsletter for many years and is currently the Club President. He is also the co-author of a book Facilities management and the business of managing assets, published in 2013.

---

# Maltese

– *Written by Carmel Baretta* –

The Republic of Malta is a tiny archipelago of 316 square kilometre, some 80 kilometre to the south of Sicily. On account of its strategic location in the Mediterranean Sea, Malta has been controlled historically by powerful rulers such as the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Aragonese, Hapsburg Spain, Knights of St John (Knights Hospitalers), French and most recently the British. The Republic of Malta was established in 1974 and in 2004 it joined the European Union. Malta is officially a bilingual state with Maltese and English, though the former is the constitutional national language. The people of Malta tend to be multilingual as most of them also speak some Italian and/or French. The Maltese language uses the Latin alphabet although it developed from an ancient Semitic dialect. There are no rivers in Malta, a country with a low annual rainfall. Malta is the smallest country of the EU in size and population with a current population of some 460,000 though it is one of the most densely populated nations worldwide, a fact which partially explains the large Maltese migrant presence in Australia.

By 1929 more than 400 Maltese-born people lived in Mackay, a northern region of Queensland which over the years was to benefit greatly from the contribution made by the people originating from Malta. Even during the post-war era migrants from Malta were keen to settle outside of Queensland's capital city and according to the census of 1996 some 61 per cent of the Malta-born lived outside of Brisbane.

Between the years 1946–1996, 68,940 migrants from Malta remained in Australia. The retention rates from the other major receiver countries, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada were lower than Australia's, a positive indication of the desirability of permanent settlement by the Maltese in Queensland and Australia. The Assisted Passage Agreement of 1948 led to an amazing wave of migration from Malta and by 1966, one in every six Maltese had settled in Australia. The Maltese in Queensland are now an old community because few new migrants have settled here in recent years. Being a full member state within the European Union now gives the young Maltese unprecedented work opportunities throughout Europe.

There are three honorary consuls for Malta in Queensland based in southeast Queensland, Mackay and Cairns; regions with old established Maltese communities.

Past generations of Maltese chose to settle in regional and rural Queensland as most of them were unskilled. They became largely sugar farmers in the Mackay areas as well as in sugar growing centres further north. They were willing to work hard and experienced little difficulties with the given climatic conditions. They took the view that their Mediterranean skin is well suited for life and agricultural work in the Queensland sun.

According to the Maltese constitution, the Roman Catholic religion has official status. The country has a long Christian legacy – St Paul ministered there. There are currently no Maltese priests in Mackay. However, the ongoing presence of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus provides a stable spiritual home and community centre for the Maltese of the Mackay region. Maltese Nuns first arrived in Mackay in 1954 for the specific purpose of caring for and holding together the Maltese community, a task they have never failed to fulfil. The Maltese Nuns administer a unique aged care home with 135 residents. On the 8 September of every year the Maltese Nuns and the Mackay Maltese Club Inc. jointly hold the religious Festival of our Lady of Victories, which includes an outdoor mass. This event celebrates the overthrowing of the Turks in 1565 by the Knights of Malta. The date also coincides with another important event in Maltese history, namely the end of World War II. At some of the religious celebrations the community sings in Maltese as well as in English and they are joined by their friends with many different ethnic backgrounds.

In 2001, Australia's centennial year of federation, Carmel Baretta and Laraine Schembri of Mackay published the book *From Humble Beginnings*, featuring the Maltese community. This publication reinvigorated the Maltese community in Queensland with pride at what had been achieved over several generations. Prior to this publication it was not widely recognised that some of the Maltese of the region were already in their sixth generation and the locals of today were keen to learn about the hardship, ethnic bigotry and courage of the people, who over many years contributed greatly to the Mackay region.

Few Maltese from overseas have migrated to Queensland in recent years, though retired Maltese people from Australia's southern states continued looking for the Queensland sun by settling mainly on the Gold Coast. Some of these new arrivals joined the local community organisation, the Australian Maltese

Gold Coast Association. Amongst the recent migrants from Malta there are also Australians who found a bride or a groom when holidaying in Malta.

Second generation Maltese rarely speak Maltese beyond their early childhood, as they grow up responding to their parents and relatives in English. There are many exceptions to this trend. The Maltese Language School, Skola Maltija Mackay, operates from the Francis of Assisi Home for the Aged but is run under the umbrella of the Mackay Maltese Club. It was formed in 2007 and caters for children as well as for adults. There are three part-time teachers and entire family units are currently participating in the Maltese language learning program.

It is noteworthy that in the Mackay area even the fourth generation of Maltese are conscious of their Mediterranean heritage and they acknowledge with pride the Maltese background of their forebears and they join the Maltese events held locally. Yet even the second generation of Maltese becomes absorbed in their daily lives by the Australian ways and their career ambitions and career achievements differ little from the Australian mainstream. It is common for them to undertake tertiary education studies and follow professional careers and some of them have a particular talent for small business.

In Mackay more so than in any other city or town in Queensland, the past and present of the Maltese community is visually recorded. The Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens boast a 'Malta Precinct' which acknowledges the huge contribution made by the Maltese to the district. The Valetta Gardens are a housing complex in the north of the city. We also have Mosta Heights—a large number of immigrants came from the Mosta area, and Mdina Heights—Mdina being the old capital of Malta; Valetta being the present capital. A large number of street signs carry Maltese family names or geographic terms of Maltese origin. Several items pertaining to the Maltese cuisine are part of the diet of the people of the Mackay region and beyond. Particularly popular are the Maltese foods which include Pastizzi (puff pastry filled with ricotta cheese), Ghagin fil forn (baked spaghetti) and everybody in Queensland's North loves Maltese sausages. Maltese dinners are frequently held in the Mackay region though in recent years the tradition of Maltese folk dancing fell by the way.

The Maltese in Queensland are a sociable people, with a commitment to hard work. They maintain links with the Catholic Church and most of them have their children baptised. They wish to maintain traditional family values and they appreciate life in a non-violent society. The early Maltese settlers had a close rapport with the Torres Strait Islanders and the Australian South Sea Islanders as they live in a close community in sugarcane growing areas, such as Farleigh and Habana. All worked as labourers cutting cane and working the fields. In fact, a number of prominent Islanders could speak conversational Maltese and were very familiar with the nicknames of the Maltese who lived in the district.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

BARETTA, Carmel is the Honorary Consul for Malta for Central Queensland. She is a past president and life member of the Mackay Maltese Club and of the Friends of Mackay Libraries. She is the co-founder and coordinator of the Maltese Language School 'Skola Maltija Mackay' and was the co-author of the book *From Humble Beginnings – Mackay Maltese Pioneers 1883–1940*, 520 pages. Carmel was the coordinator of a number of photographic exhibitions including *Our Shared Heritage*, *Salute to Mackay Maltese Pioneering Women*, *Witness of our Lives*, and *Journey to Australia*. Carmel is the Vice-President of the Mackay and District Italian Association and has been involved with the Pony Club movement for over 20 years, serving as a chief instructor and as an accredited judge.

---

# Manx

– *Written by Doug Quayle* –

The Manx are people who were born on the Isle of Man, an island of 572 sq. km set in the Irish Sea, halfway between England and Ireland. The island has been inhabited for over 8 500 years. Although it is a Crown Possession with the Governor appointed by the Crown, the Isle of Man is self-governing with its own parliament called Tynwald. The Tynwald was founded more than 1000 years ago and is recognised as the oldest continuous parliament in the world. The capital is Douglas and the island has a population of 84,500 (2011 census). Over the centuries, the Island has been ruled by Norse, Scots and English Kings and by sovereign Lords of Mann from 1406 until 1765, when it was acquired by the British Crown. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, ‘Lord of Mann’, is the Head of State and is represented in the Island by the Lieutenant Governor. The island is known as *Ellen Vannin* as is the National Anthem.

The Manx are predominantly Protestants and are ethnically derived from the Celts and the Norse. They carry a proud island heritage; their independence and their ancient traditions differ from those people living in other parts of the British Isles. The Celtic language of Manx is closely related to the Gaelic of both north-west Ireland and the western islands of Scotland. The last native speaker of Manx Gaelic, Ned Madrell, died in 1974 but the language has been revived in recent times. It is now taught in schools and competitions for both adults and children are now held in song, poetry and story to promote the language and culture.

Today only few dozen Manx are competent speakers of their ancient Celtic language and there are only hundreds of speakers with some knowledge of Manx Gaelic. Few speakers of Manx live outside of the British Isles.

In 1985 Manx became co-official language with English and there has been some increased use of the language in visible signage and in broadcasting. Some of the Manx in Australia understand and actively use phrases such as ‘*fastyr mie*’, meaning ‘good afternoon’.

The Island is usually noted for the TT (Tourist Trophy) motorcycle races which are held annually and draw many thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts and its unusual animals: the Manx tailless cat and sheep with four horns. In the commercial sphere it is known for its financial services industry and many would have seen parts of the Island through the many movies and TV programs produced there.

The majority of the emigrants from the Isle of Man have traditionally settled in Britain. However a small number of Manx came to Australia even before the first European settlement in Moreton Bay. Considerable interest in emigration by the Manx was generated during the Victorian gold rush. By 1891 there were about 1300 Manx-born people in Australia but their numbers declined to 700 by 1947. A small number of Manx came to colonial Queensland as assisted migrants.

The world wars and the Depression of the 1930s interrupted the flow of Manx migrants to Queensland. According to the census of 1991 there were 177 Manx-born people in this state, a figure that declined to 86 in 1996. Historical statistics in regard to the Manx are often difficult to interpret because of their integration with British figures.

In any Queensland telephone book there are many typical Manx names such as Cain, Faragher, Kermode, Kneen, Quayle, Quine, Corlett, Cowle. The Manx also carry British and Irish family names such as Kelly.

The Queensland Manx Society (QMS) was established on 22 August 1914 and is one of the oldest ethnic organisations in Queensland. The objectives of the QMS have been to maintain a social fellowship and foster an interest in all things Manx. The first function undertaken by the QMS was a picnic to Seventeen Miles Rocks. On 14 November 1914 the steamer *Vera Veg Veen*, with 93 QMS members aboard and flying the IoM flag (a red ensign with the three legged triskelion), set sail up the Brisbane River to the picnic spot. Early information suggests that none of the members was proficient in the Manx language but that Manx phrases were extensively used during the early times of the society. The Manx and Australian National Anthem are sung at meetings and the Manx National day, usually on July 5, Tynwald Day.

The QMS is looking forward to celebrating its 100th years of community service in 2014. Membership has been reduced in recent years with illness and old age taking their toll but there is still a hard core group with a strong interest in maintaining the Society and making all attempts to attract new and younger members. One of the children photographed during the first QMS picnic excursion of 1914 was still an active member of the Society during the early years of the present century.

The Manx are English-speakers, a fact that continues to facilitate the integration in Queensland of new settlers

from the island. Many of the Manx came to colonial Queensland following careers in mining, farming or in occupations linked to transport or the sea. Some of new arrivals had already worked as miners in America or in others of Australia. Their descendants own small businesses or have entered the professions. They are doctors, engineers, bankers, and teachers. Others are engaged in small business, the trades or have remained on the land.

Thomas Cain was born in 1865 in the Parish of St. Anne, Isle of Man. He came to Queensland in 1889 and lived in the Woolloongabba area working as a carrier with Dalgety & Co. He took goods to stores and shops in the suburbs. His brother, Douglas, followed him in 1890.

George William Cowin arrived in Australia in 1881 aged 17 and bought a farm a Grandchester in 1886. He returned to Brisbane in 1887, bought a draught horse and established a carrying business. In 1893 he won an important contract with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (now CSR) to deliver refined sugar and in 1913 he purchased a petrol-engined solid-tyre English Belsize truck, and became the first master carrier to use motorised transport in Queensland.

Edna Maud Coulson (née Mylchreest) came to Australia from the Isle of Man as a child in 1908 and during World War II she undertook volunteer work. After the war she was involved in on-arrival migrant welfare services and in 1988 received a Queensland Migrant Services Award.

Other settlers who have descendants in the QMS were Alexander James Quayle who became Mayor of Gayndah; Joseph Forster who came via the goldfields of America and Thomas Moore who brought his coachwork talents to country Queensland.

To this day migrants from the Isle of Man have chosen Queensland for a better life for themselves and their families, and they were also attracted by the climate. They not only contributed to the economy and the developments of a growing State but also support the Australian war effort in all international engagements with some serving in the military.

Emigrants still come to Australia from the Isle of Man, and the families. Recent arrivals settled in rapidly and are thriving in various parts of Queensland and doing

all sorts of jobs. In earlier times they were generally poor and came to work in coal mines and on the gold fields but in the digital age they are taking a lifestyle and work experience to destination Queensland which differs little from other English-speaking migrants. The former conservative though excellent Manx seamen, farmers and fishermen who in the past were God-fearing, law-abiding and motivated for hard physical work have been superseded as migrants by a young generation of mobile and technology savvy new settlers. Although the first and subsequent generations of Manx share a yearning for their island home, they are well integrated and loyal Australians renowned for their commitment to work and their devotion to their families.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

QUAYLE, Doug was born in England and his heritage is three parts Manx and one part Irish. His Manx paternal family comes from Ramsey and his maternal side from Port Erin/Peel. Doug's parents and three brothers migrated to Townsville in 1948. He joined the Postmaster-General's Department in 1953 and worked in Brisbane, Sydney, Mount Isa, Innisfail and Townsville. He later joined the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Social Security in Canberra from where he retired in 1996. He now lives with his wife on Bribie Island.

Information received from Valerie Mylchreest Ashworth is gratefully acknowledged. She is the grand-daughter of a Manx fisherman who came to Brisbane in 1909 and four of his five daughters became enthusiastic members of the Queensland Manx Society, founded in 1914. Valerie is the Society's current vice president and a former president and secretary.

---

# Maoris

– *Written by John David Shortland* –

The Maori race is generally referred to as tangata whenua (natives) of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Since 1987 Aotearoa/New Zealand has two official languages and therefore the bilingual aspect of the multicultural society is growing throughout the nation. Auckland is the largest city of Aotearoa/New Zealand has also the largest Polynesian population residing there.

Historically through the British Empire developing colonies: Australia followed by Aotearoa/New Zealand some fifty years later. Conflict between Maori populations and the settlers, Pakeha, (white) over a new world being introduced creating trading. In many different ways this was very foreign to native Maori populations.

On February 6, 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was forged between the native Maori people and the European/Pakeha settlers. This document became an ongoing topic of contention and confusion. Following World War II, the drift from rural life to urban settlement led to a new dawn for the Maori populations in Aotearoa/New Zealand. These new ways of living and gaining mobility through living and working in towns and cities prepared Maori people for emigration to Australia. Maoris accustomed to urban living are more likely to travel and seek life experiences outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Reciprocal settlement agreements between the governments of Australia and New Zealand also facilitate migration. The Maoris are particularly keen to settle on Queensland's Gold Coast and in Brisbane. These two locations are appealing because they have traditionally attracted visitors from Aotearoa/New Zealand for holidays. As a consequence of the transfer to Brisbane and the Gold Coast, there are now around 30,000 Maoris in greater Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, making in the third largest Maori population on the planet, behind Auckland and Wellington.

Many Maori families are attracted to Queensland by the great sub-tropical climate. The power of one successful migrant is known to flourish into larger numbers ultimately deciding to arrive and live in many different parts of Queensland. The word travels very quickly. New relations are fostered in Queensland by new Maori residents and between families living in both nations separated by the Tasman Sea.

Among the varying reasons expressed by the most recent arrivals from Aotearoa/New Zealand there is a focus on greater range of options for work and career opportunities. Family members or acquaintances

already living in Queensland can give advice on employment before intending migrants fly to Queensland. There is still a widely held belief that what you know is less important than who you know when planning to migrate to Queensland. By knowing someone already in employment in Queensland the intending new settlers gain some confidence in not having to start cold.

Maori, like many other Polynesian Pacific Oceanic countrymen/women in Aotearoa/New Zealand tend to have low skill levels. They are willing to start at the manual labour levels. As time goes by and by adjusting to the conditions of the Queensland work places, Maori also wish to improve their occupational status.

The better educated Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand are completing tertiary level educational and training programs. Institutions are increasingly promoting Maori participation in tertiary education. Maori organisations are now providing better social services for Maori communities and promote their capacity and capability, thus gaining respect internationally. Young and educated Maori may still seek careers in the traditional industries but, increasingly, they are training and working in new age industries such as information technology. Maori graduates also seek employment in Queensland as teachers and public servants and they are attracted to working in the health and social services.

The world of worship and spirituality has always been, and will be for a long time into the future of Maoridom communities, part of a lifestyle. Several religious congregations in the greater Brisbane are originated in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The Ratana Anglican Maori Mission, Destiny, the Mormons and many more Christian denominations make up the spiritual fulfilment for Maori who have chosen to settle in Queensland.

Ever since Maori have chosen to settle here in Queensland they have pursued their traditional cultural endeavour. In the Maori world in Queensland and Australia-wide the end of life, when we meet our creator, is of great personal significance. Tangihanga—the ceremony of mourning for the dead—is by far the strongest hui-ritual, the heartbeat of Maori culture. Over the years, this practice has found itself being modified slightly to incorporate some Christian features, and public health requirements need to be met. The duration of tangi varies. Our loved ones who pass away in Queensland are affected by decisions that impact

on families in a number of ways. Over the last fifteen years many families have been challenged in a number of ways. There are financial factors and in the case of mixed ethnic unions there can be some obstacles when trying to meet the needs of families and comforting them – decisions must be taken in regard to how and where to lay to rest their loved ones.

The Maori have increased in number in Queensland and as more families are settling here there has been a noticeable increase of loved ones by laid to rest in Queensland. In death, often in the past, the Maori were returned home wherever they came from in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, in this fast moving and rapidly evolving world, traditions are superseded, a trend which has been observed during this millennium.

The Queensland lifestyle and the noticeably warmer climate encourage the practice of a range of outdoor activities. The laid back ways of local Queenslanders also suit the Maori new arrivals. Coastal living encourages socialising through outdoor eating and great opportunities for mixing people of different ethnic backgrounds. Adopting relative similar ways of water use mixed with hosting more outdoor eating habits. Today there are many examples of successful mixed marriages, a phenomenon derived from multicultural diversity. Logan, Ipswich and the Gold Coast are just a few areas where with reference to the Maori this diversity appears to be the norm.

Contact sport in Queensland and Australia are of great interest to the Maori arriving from Aotearoa/New Zealand. They were exposed or even participated actively in such sports in the home country. Rugby League strikes a great appeal, especially with the two nations being situated so close together geographically. In recent years the Queensland Maori Rugby League have been holding successful tournaments for aspiring young players who could possibly use this platform as a springboard for future sporting glory.

The Australian calendar for Maori events often differs from the celebrations in the home country. Some annual events are celebrated on different dates. Waitangi Day in Queensland is celebrated as a family day out, with a blend of traditional cultural foods and stalls offering a range of contemporary

and traditional items and products either brought from across the Tasman or locally made. Waitangi Day is always well attended though it is held without alcohol being served.

The journey of the Maori language in Queensland has been an off and on. Many aspiring tutors and willing learners discover the differing lifestyles adopted after landing in Queensland are not conducive to language learning and language maintenance. Furthermore, in this vast land the Maori are spread far and wide. It is difficult to maintain the Maori language and culture under Queensland conditions. The will and desire to learn is there but often the results do not quite match the initial enthusiasm for learning. Bilingualism is nevertheless a useful tool in Queensland when you are intent on manoeuvring in and around the Maori people. The generations now being born here adopt largely Australian lifestyles.

Over the years many Maori organisations in Australia were formed to serve not only their own populations but also a cross section of other cultural groups. The Queensland Maori Society, which has been in existence for as long as 27 years has links with the Queensland Government and has been successful with several initiatives involving Maoridom in Queensland. The annual and largest showcase for Brisbane, the Ekka, which in the nineteenth century started off as an agricultural display. In 1998 several hundred Maori from throughout Queensland performed several items of our culture at the Ekka. Over of five years, between 2005 and 2011, the Logan City Council allowed Maoridom the use of a block of land in the old Carbrook School area. The use of this land allowed many cultural activities to take place, including Maori language learning activities. These were happy times for my community. Maoridom is currently on the hunt for another location so that we can express ourselves culturally. The Queensland Maori Rugby League annual tournament held for our aspiring youth is held in conjunction with the Queensland Maori Society by bringing together hundreds of families and giving aspiring players an opportunity to reach the ultimate heights in their chosen sport. These young players in turn are able to travel to Aotearoa/New Zealand and play in another arranged tournament through selection. Last year other sports such as netball, rugby union, and softball were all included in a tournament intended to expose more Maori sporting talent.

The local Kiwi Golf Club participates at local and interstate tournaments competing against teams from Aotearoa/New Zealand. These tournaments can attract up to 1,000 competing golfers. After such friendly competitions much socialising takes place with the visitors from the across the Tasman. The presence of large numbers of Maori living in Queensland promotes this state in their former home country and there are unprecedented opportunities for bilateral interaction. Maori successes in Queensland are noticed in their former home country.

The Maori in Brisbane have been blessed by having access to a very important tool for purposes of disseminating their community messages in the Maori language as well as in English, namely Radio 4EB. The size of the Radio 4EB financial membership determines the amount of broadcasting time our Maori communities receive. A group of volunteer radio broadcasters give of their own time to ensure a smorgasbord of information is broadcast bilingually. The programming group ensures that the particular interests to the Maori communities in Queensland are addressed. The young Maori in Queensland also access the internet to satisfy their information needs and, in some instances, to overcome their social isolation in the new country.

There is a steady and free flowing tourism and travel link up and exchange between Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, two closely related and closely located sovereign states. Both countries belong to the rare breed nations with a long term national immigration program. This communality in the two countries' need for more and skilled migrants shaped the specific and bilateral migration agreement between the two countries. For purposes of long term or permanent settlement, the flow of people across the Tasman has been strongly in Australia's favour. As a consequence of changes to bilateral migration policies, new arrivals from Aotearoa/New Zealand lost the former privilege which gave them access to Australia's Centrelink benefits and other perks relating to new settlers. They were phased out long ago. Maori families who found themselves arriving in Queensland after that cut-off date for the benefits former Centrelink arrangements had a long term effect on new settlers from across the Tasman. Migrating to Queensland and Australia became more challenging. Many newly arrived Maori had to endure homelessness and there was extensive overcrowding in Queensland Maori homes. Having several generations living in a tight space under the same roof is not new

culturally but the traditional Maori practice of communal living does no longer apply to the Maori way of life of today. In the 21 century they are increasingly pursuing independent lifestyles.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

SHORTLAND, John David was born in Kawakawa Aotearoa/New Zealand of Maori parents. He attended Victoria University of Wellington, Waikato University of Hamilton and Te Wananga O Aotearoa Te Awamutu. He worked with the New Zealand Post Office specialising in banking followed by employment in private enterprise. He arrived in Brisbane in 1998 and settled in Logan City where he continues his career in the transport industry. Since arriving in Logan, John was actively engaged in Maori cultural activities. Being a bilingual and bicultural New Zealander/Aotearoa, he spent a period of time as a volunteer community broadcaster for Radio 4EB.

---

# Mauritians

– Written by Diana Mary Guillemin –

## A multicultural and multilingual nation

Like Australia, the tiny tropical island of Mauritius (population 1.33 m) boasts of being one of the most multicultural and multilingual nations in the world. However, unlike Australia, Mauritius had no indigenous population. The French were the first to settle there permanently in 1721, when they arrived with consignments of slaves, initially from West Africa, and later from East Africa and Madagascar to work on the sugar plantations. Following the abolition of slavery in 1835, indentured labourers were brought in from India, and Indians continued to migrate to Mauritius in large numbers. Today they comprise 70 per cent of the Mauritian population. Other ethnic groups who came to Mauritius in the nineteenth century included Chinese and Muslims. They each brought with them their languages, religions and culinary traditions, all of which have survived to this day to make Mauritius a veritable cultural melting pot.

Ile de France, as named by the French remained under French rule until 1810. Following defeat by the British during the Napoleonic Wars, the island was relinquished to the British, who renamed it Mauritius. It remained under British rule until its independence in 1968, and the island became a Republic in 1992.

Despite 150 years of British rule, the Mauritians of European descents have adhered to French language and culture, with which they still like to be identified. English is the official language, used in the fields of education and the law, but spoken in the homes by only three per cent of the population. French is the dominant language of the media and is understood by most educated Mauritians, though it is the sole language of only 3.5 per cent of the population. Mauritian Creole, a French based creole with a very different grammar from that of French is the lingua franca of the island, spoken by 80 per cent in the home, and it is understood by almost all. Many Mauritians of Indian and Chinese descent also use their ancestral languages in conjunction with Mauritian Creole.

Many Mauritians who have migrated to Australia continue to speak both Mauritian Creole and French in their homes. However, the fact that they have been educated in English has facilitated their assimilation in Australia.

## The links between Mauritius and Australia

The strategic position of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, some 8,500 km west of Perth offered a convenient stopover for ships that rounded the Cape of Good Hope heading for South East Asia and Australia. Mauritius was ‘an important base for Australian coastal exploration’ (Duyker 2001:592), and the links between the two countries were forged early in the eighteenth century. Matthew Finders was imprisoned on the island from 1803 to 1810, during which time he chose the name ‘Australia’ for the continent then referred to as Terra Australis or New Holland.

A trading relationship was established between Mauritius and New South Wales after the Peace of Amiens (1802-03), and Mauritius became the major supplier of sugar to Australia. Between 1817 and 1851 some 60 ships travelled from Mauritius to NSW and Tasmania bringing over 200 convicts of various ethnic origins, namely, African, Malagasy, Indian, Chinese and British (Duyker 2001:593). Early immigrants also included prospectors drawn to the Victorian goldfields, and skilled sugar workers who eventually made a significant contribution to the development of the Queensland sugar industry. By 1847, a plot of cane cuttings obtained from Java and Mauritius was growing in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens (Duyker 1988).

## The contribution of Mauritians to the Queensland sugar industry

The rationalisation of the Mauritian sugar industry in the 1860s prompted a number of expert sugar technologists to move to Australia. Jerome Thomy de Keating (b.1826), who arrived in Sydney in 1865, proposed that it would be cheaper to produce sugar locally than import from Mauritius, and was soon appointed as managing director of the Maryborough Sugar Company. Dr Paul Laurent Edmond Icery (1824–1883) was instrumental in developing sugar refining technology, with the result that ‘Australia almost exclusively manufactured white sugar until the 1890’s (Duyker 2001:595). B. Cohen de Lissa and Joseph Léonel Duval both managed sugar plantations in Mackay, while Léon Burghez and Charles Edouard Lacaze (1862–1950) oversaw the Gairloch estate on the Herbert River. Leon Burguez (1830–18887),

grandfather of the landscape painter Lloyd Rees, is credited with naming the Trebonne district near Ingham (from the French *très bonne*) (Duyker 2001:594), and Lacaze was the first to manufacture pure white sugar in Queensland (Duyker: 201:55). All of these Mauritians would have been of European descent.

## Post World War II immigration

The number of Mauritians in Australia at the turn of the century totalled 740, and approximately 100 were in Queensland. Numbers declined thereafter, but Mauritians once again started to migrate to Australia at the end of World War II, though migration was limited to those of European heritage due to the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which required that prospective settlers be 'at least 75 per cent European'.

Two major factors triggered the wave of Mauritian immigration to Australia from the late 1960s onwards. Political unrest at the time of Mauritian independence and the abolition of the White Australia policy, which meant that Mauritians from the 'mixed population' were accepted in Australia. Over 14,000 emigrated between 1966 and 1972, but despite the similarity in the climate of Mauritius and that of Queensland (Mauritius is at approximately the same latitude as Townsville), Mauritians did not choose this state as their destination. Instead, they went to Melbourne and Sydney, where they easily found employment in the manufacturing industries. However, in the 1980s and 1990s many Mauritians who reached retirement age moved north to settle on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts. The number of Mauritians in Queensland now stands at 5,368 (2011 Census). The resurgence of the Mauritian economy following the development of tourism and other local industries from the 1980s onwards resulted in a fall in the number of Mauritians migrating to Australia.

## Cultural contribution

Despite being under British rule for over 150 years, Mauritians have retained a strong allegiance to all things French and this is reflected in their cultural contribution to Australia, namely the promotion of French language and culture. They choose to participate in French cultural activities such as those organised by the Alliance Française and the French club French Assist, and a number have worked as French language

teachers. Broadcasting of Mauritian news features during the French program on Radio 4EB, where the familiar voice of Désirée Latour has been heard for over 15 years.

The Mauritians who have migrated to Australia have also retained a close affiliation with the Catholic Church, and this double allegiance is manifested in through the Franco-Mauritian Catholic Association (FMCA). Incidentally, in the early nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in Australia was administered from Mauritius. The FMCA is a non-profit cultural organisation, which was founded in 1993 with the aim of organising pastoral and fundraising activities. It donates all profits to Mauritian and local charities, and issues a regular newsletter to its members. The first president of the FMCA was Eric Quevauvilliers, who is currently the Consul of Mauritius, based in Brisbane. Another club that integrates Mauritians with the French is the Deception Bay Pétanque Club, founded in 1999. Mauritian players were part of the teams that won the Australian championships - Mico Charlot in the men's team in 2000, and Danielle Grancourt in the women's team in 2004. Mauritians from Queensland were also included in the teams that represented Australia at the world championships in New Zealand, New Caledonia, Geneva and Portugal.

Mauritius shares with Australia the fact that they were both British colonies that have evolved into tolerant multicultural and multilingual nations with exciting culinary traditions that blend European and Asian cuisines. The reader is invited to discover more on the Mauritian way of life and how it contributes to the Australian multicultural landscape in the 'Mauritius Australia Connection Newsletter' at: <http://www.cjp.net/macnews.htm>.

### References

- Duyker, E. 1988. *Of the star and the key: Mauritius and Australia*. Sydney: Australian Mauritian Research Group.
- Duyker, E. 2001. Mauritians. In, *The Australian people: An encyclopaedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, J. Jupp (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

GUILLEMIN, Diana Mary received her secondary education in her native Mauritius, and tertiary education at The University of Melbourne (Bachelor of Arts (hons), Master of Arts (hons), Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Graduate Diploma in Librarianship), and University of Queensland (PhD in Linguistics). She has worked as a librarian in State, University, and Public libraries, as a publisher in the academic publishing industry, and as lecturer at the University of Queensland and Griffith University. Her particular interests lie in syntax, semantics, and the Creole language of Mauritius on which she has published extensively. She has been living in Brisbane since 1984.

---

# Mexicans

– *Written by Edith Hartney* –

Mexico today is a modern industrial country and an emerging economic power with abundant resources of oil, a young population and one of the world's largest consumer nations across its northern border, the US. Its citizens represent the largest Spanish-speaking community with a national population of 116 million. Mexico's Indigenous people, representing 15 per cent of the country's population, speak 65 languages.

Prior to its colonisation by Spain in the 15th century, Mexico had one of the world's most advanced civilisations dominated by the Aztecs and Mayan nations. However, many other smaller tribes also inhabited Mexico. In our time, notably the Zapotec people in southern Mexico still manage to retain much of their ancient culture and language. Spanish colonisation also implied the arrival in Mexico of the Roman Catholic religion, the adoption of the Spanish language and the introduction of many new skills and crafts. By combining the cultural achievements of Mexico's pre-Hispanic heritage with innovations imported from Spain, the people of Mexico were able to evolve the vibrant modern society of today.

Mexico's role in the Queensland multicultural people landscape is still in its infancy as traditionally the key destination for Mexican emigration are the United States and Canada, a natural consequence of geographic proximity. There are more migrants here in Queensland from other parts of Latin America and some of them had to settle here on account of recent civil wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Chile. However, since Mexico's independence from Spain in 1810, the country has been relatively peaceful. North-bound Mexicans traditionally leave their home country for the sole purpose of improving their private economic circumstances.

When my husband and I moved to Brisbane in 1989 very little was known by the locals about Mexico or its culture. Most people we spoke to imagined Mexico as just desert and cacti. There was one significant exception: Mexico participated at Expo 88 and the Queenslanders just loved the traditional Mexican band.

Since the time of our arrival, the local Mexican population has grown to about 20 families living permanently in Queensland. There is also a floating Mexican population of about 80 full-time students. On graduation most of these students from the universities in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast decide to make their lives here because Queensland and Australia offer excellent career opportunities, stability and a desirable climate.

Fortunately, during the last 25 years, the perception of Mexico has changed dramatically and more people are aware of the fact that Mexico has become the most important economic hub in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Mexico's cultural traditions are increasingly recognised and celebrated around the world. In Queensland and Australia, Mexican food is currently experiencing wide acceptance. This growing food sector is in evidence in supermarkets – most of them now display a special Mexican food section.

Brisbane now boasts around 30 Mexican restaurants and most larger towns in Queensland have at least one Mexican eatery where the locals can hang out and eat their burrito and sip their margaritas. The Mexican Independence Day celebrations (15th September) in Queensland are becoming larger and more popular than ever, with many Latinos and Australians engaging in all night celebrations of music, food and tequila.

During the last five years or so the Dia De Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations have also gained wider acceptance in Queensland, a memorial tradition observed in Mexico at every cemetery. Parties are organised on the first two days of November and in recent years non-Mexican Queenslanders have taken on board this extremely popular cultural event. Mexicans have been celebrating this religious event for many centuries by embracing death and communicating with departed relatives and friends.

Multicultural Queensland is benefiting from the presence of our small but growing Mexican community as we wish to share with all Queenslanders our love for colour, music, food and of course tequila.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

HARTNEY, Edith came from the southern state of Oaxaca and moved to Queensland in 1989, with her Australian husband and two children. She is of Indigenous Mexican background (Zapotec) and both their children grew up amongst strong cultural traditions dating back hundreds of years. The key reason behind the Hartneys' move to Australia was to provide their children with new opportunities. Although her husband's family is based in Victoria, they were attracted for settlement purposes by Queensland's quality of life (weather, natural environment and sound prospects for setting up a small business).

---

# Moldovans

– *Written by Alina Ibanescu-Augustin* –

Moldova, officially called the Republic of Moldova, is located in Eastern Europe and shares borders with Romania and Ukraine. In 1812 as a result of the Russian-Turkish Peace Treaty signed in Bucharest, the eastern part of Moldova situated between the Prut and Nistru rivers, named Bessarabia, was annexed by the Russian Empire, thus becoming a Russian province until 1918. During this year the supreme authority of the Bessarabian state, Sfatul Tarii, decided to join Romania in a union which lasted till 1940, the year when the country was annexed by the Soviet Union, a consequence of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939. Moldova thus functioned as a territorial entity within the USSR until the last decade of the twentieth century.

On the 27th of August 1991, the Republic of Moldova became an independent and sovereign State. The capital city of Moldova is Chisinau and the country has a population of 3,560,400 (2011) and its total land area is 33,846 sq. km. It is a parliamentary republic with a president as head of state and a prime minister as head of government, and is a member of the United Nations.

Moldova is a country with rolling hills, picturesque farms and villages and attractive historic buildings. It is one of the world's biggest exporters of wine grown on 147,000 hectares of vineyards, an agricultural industry which also serves as a major tourist attraction. In recent years Moldova came to the attention of Australians and to people around the globe by the musical achievement of the Moldovan groups performing at the European Song Festival, the most widely watched annual event on the European TV calendar.

A small number of Moldovans—in English they are also called Moldavians—have come to Queensland in search of a better life. Moldovans in Europe and Australia are traditionally adherents to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. When the Republic of Moldova was founded in 1991, its language was referred to as Romanian yet according to the constitution of 1994, the country's official language is now called Moldovan. Linguists classify Moldovan as Romanian.

Therefore, when people originating from the two countries meet on Australian soil they feel a natural affinity for each other. This linguistic affinity is enhanced by ethnic, cultural and historical communalities. The

Republic of Moldova is still a new country. It will take us time to meet Moldovans willing to talk about their journey, as this emerging community is working on gaining the trust to assume who they are. There is a need for good leadership taking responsibility to act and speak on their behalf as even in distant Australia the Moldovans are still reluctant to talk about themselves.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

IBANESCU-AUGUSTIN, Alina was born in Barlad, a small town situated in Eastern Romania and grew up under a totalitarian regime. She was 12 years old when the Romanian Revolution overthrew the communist dictator. The revolution brought democracy to Romania and consequently, as a teenager, she had the freedom to decide her area of study after many years of compulsory studies in mechanics or electronics in the Romanian educational system. She gained a bachelor's degree majoring in Geography and French Studies and started teaching French in Romania. In 2004, Alina went to France where she worked as an interpreter/translator for the police and organisations actively supporting the professional integration of refugees and migrants. She arrived in Brisbane in September 2010 and is currently teaching French at the Alliance Française, at the University of Queensland and Cleveland State High School.

---

# Mongolians

– Written by Gantulga Yondon –

Modern Mongolia, the world's least densely populated country, shares borders with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. The Mongolians were one of the earliest Central and East Asian people now living in a dry landlocked country with harsh climatic conditions. During ancient times the Mongolians were generally nomadic people and some of them still live nomadically today. They traditionally bred sheep, cattle, horses, goats and camels. There are over 10 million Mongolians in the world and around 2.7 million are living in Mongolia. More than five million Mongolians live in Inner Mongolia and other districts or provinces of China and most of the Mongolians in Russia live in the Buryat and Kalmyk autonomous provinces.

The main language of the Mongolian People's Republic is Mongolian, which belongs to the Altaic language family. It is related to the Turkic, Manchurian, Korean and Japanese languages. Traditionally, Mongolians are Buddhists and Shamanists but many people, especially the younger generations, move towards Christianity. There is a small minority of Sunni Muslims.

After many nomadic empires rose and fell, Mongolia became in 1206 AD the Great Mongol State, founded by the remarkable leader Genghis Khan. Soon it became the largest ever contiguous empire in the world. In 1911, following the fall of the Chin dynasty in China, Mongolia proclaimed its independence de-facto. In 1921, Mongolia re-established independence but due to political circumstances it became a Soviet Union-controlled communist country. It remained part of the Soviet Bloc until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. After the breakdown of the communist alliance, Mongolia became a modern and democratic state in 1990. Mongolia and Australia established diplomatic relations in 1972.

After the Second World War, some few Mongolian people from the Russian and Chinese Mongolian provinces migrated to Australia. During the 1990s an increasing number of Mongolians chose to relocate to Australia. Their home country was slowly transitioning from a communist regime to a free market economy yet Mongolia's economy remained severely depressed. Career opportunities in Mongolia were scarce and well educated young Mongolians left for overseas looking for rewarding careers.

At the present some 110 Mongolians live in Queensland, the majority residing in the Brisbane metropolitan area. Many of them know each other and remain in personal contact. A third of them have become permanent Australian residents usually taking out Australian citizenship. On graduating with an Australian master's degree in engineering, the author of this article on the Mongolians in Queensland became a permanent Australian resident. Those with tertiary education qualifications and appropriate work experience are largely employed as engineers or technicians.

Students and their families make up the majority of the Mongolians in Queensland. Many The young Mongolians are enrolled as students in the Queensland universities or study in TESOL language teaching institutions. Some of them are private students paying commercial tuition fees and others are supported by scholarships offered by Australia or Mongolia or other sponsors.

Educated Mongolians easily adjust to living in sub-tropical Brisbane and expanded bilateral relations will lead to increased numbers of Mongolians wishing to study, work and live in Queensland. A small portion of the Mongolian community in Queensland consists of families with mixed ethnic backgrounds.

The first Mongolian organisation in Queensland was established on the initiative of several local residents, on the 22 November 2009. Mongolians who live in Queensland elected seven people as board members of the Mongolian Community Association in Queensland Inc. Gantulga Yondon was elected the first president of this Mongolian community organisation. It was formally registered in Queensland on the 15th January 2010, by the Office of Fair Trade. The official website of the Mongolian Community Association in Queensland Inc. is [www.shinelegmongol.wordpress.com](http://www.shinelegmongol.wordpress.com). This association is actively supporting the Mongolians in Queensland and it promotes bilateral commercial and cultural contacts between Queensland/Australia and Mongolia. A member of the association accompanied the first Queensland trade mission to Mongolia in 2011.

In recent years relations between Australia and Mongolia have strengthened. Mongolia opened an Embassy in Canberra in 2008 and in 2010 the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) appointed a trade commissioner to Mongolia. There are now 18 Australian companies listed on the Australian Securities Exchange with interests in 56 Mongolian mineral assets and 45 Australian companies have opened offices mainly in the capital city Ulaanbaatar.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

YONDON, Gantulga was born in 1968 and grew up in Mongolia. He has worked in many roles such as an engineer and office manager in Mongolian telecommunications, postal and banking services. He and his family arrived in Brisbane in 2004 to undertake postgraduate studies. He obtained a Master's degree from Queensland University of Technology in 2005 and joined the staff of telecommunications and information technology companies in Brisbane. He was one of the founders of the Mongolian Community Association in Queensland and became its first president. Gantulga is also a representative in the Tsahim Urtuu, a worldwide non-government organisation and the largest networking organisation of Mongolians in Australia. He is also a columnist and blogger for several websites and newspapers in Mongolia. His first book *Mongolian paint* was published in 2011.

---

# Montenegrians

– *Written by Nick Gjokmarkovic* –

Montenegro (meaning ‘black mountain’) is a small multiethnic country with only 650,000 people. In 2006 it joined the family of European nations by gaining its political independence. Montenegro is a Mediterranean country endowed with breathtaking and rugged physical beauty and a rich tapestry of cultural history. It offers an amazing range of geographic and climatic diversity. You can take a swim in the Adriatic Sea and on the same day you can go skiing on snow. The Tara River Canyon is the second deepest canyon in the world with amazing views. Budva and Sveti Stefan are also not to be forgotten, bringing a lot of international tourism.

There are perhaps 120 people in Queensland who consider themselves as Montenegrians or as Montenegrin Australians, including their Australian-born children. There are too few of us to make a community association viable. Most of us live in greater Brisbane and keep in contact with other Montenegrians and there are also some extended families. Montenegrin parents care for the Australian education of their offspring as they want to give them career opportunities their migrant parents did not enjoy. Montenegrians in Queensland are keen to preserve the language of their ancestors. Therefore the Montenegrin children living in Queensland are brought up as bilinguals though their level of literacy in Montenegrin is usually low. In the Montenegrin home in Queensland cultural traditions are also maintained such as folk music, songs and some of the dishes of the Mediterranean cuisine.

There are 15 nationalities in Montenegro and half of the population is ethnic Montenegrin. In addition to the national language called Montenegrin there are four recognised regional languages. Montenegrians respect their fellow citizens and cherish their diverse cultural heritage which was shaped by Christian, Muslim, Illyrian, Byzantine, Turkish and Slav civilisations as well as Albanian and many others. Cultural diversity left important visual marks such as minarets, mediaeval Christian churches and the secular historic and contemporary buildings also enhance Montenegro’s most important industry: tourism.

As Montenegrin migrants come from a multicultural country they can easily adjust to Australian societal conditions though problems with English used to slow down the process of integration. In the home country as well as in Queensland, Montenegrians are

continuing to develop a strong national identity based on their country having attained its independence. Multicultural societies such as are Australia and Montenegro are conducive to better international understanding and communication and inter-marriage is more common and accepted. In Montenegro the all-important tourist industry derives much benefit from the harmonious and cosmopolitan local society. Montenegrians are also looking forward to joining the European Union and the euro already serves as the national currency.

The Montenegrians in Queensland tend to be realistic people. They know that Australia offers political stability and great opportunities for education and careers. The migrants who came to Queensland long ago remember only too well the sad conflicts of the past that still haunt many people originating from the Balkan region. At the end of the day we are all God’s children regardless of what culture you come from.

Sports, notably soccer and handball, in which we just finished in second place in the European Championship by losing only to Hungary, are an important contributing factor to European unity and to the evolution of the new nation of Montenegro. Sport also represents an important activity which binds all Australians together and facilitates the integration of migrants and refugees. Every adult Montenegrin, in Queensland and elsewhere in the world, cherishes Montenegro’s most remarkable soccer achievement. The national soccer team of Montenegro is the only national team in the world never to be beaten by England, neither when playing in Montenegro nor in England – there an advantage in being a new nation. There are more soccer players in England than there are people in Montenegro.

Montenegrians in Queensland have few difficulties with identifying two home countries, Australia and Montenegro. Australia has been good to most of us. Migrants from Montenegro were given work opportunities, which did not exist in the home country. Our houses and homes and jobs are here in Queensland and our children can follow lives and careers which do not differ from the Australian mainstream. The Montenegrin migrants brought to Queensland carried with them a commitment to hard work as our culture reinforces our work ethics. Here we have become successful Australians even if our hearts still tick for Montenegro.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

GJOKMARKOVIC, Nick was born and raised in Bar, Montenegro (former Yugoslavia) and migrated to Australia with his family in 1969. He completed primary school and high school in Brisbane. He followed a career as a manager of large stores and is now a Brisbane franchisee with an Australian company with international stores in Croatia and Slovenia. Being a keen soccer player during his youth brought Nick into contact with people of many different nationalities. When growing up he was encouraged to maintain his people's culture and to build relationships with people from many different backgrounds. His multicultural attitude has also been applied in the store he runs as a franchisee and currently he has people of 14 different nationalities working for him. His store has the feel of a traditional store in Europe where staff members are trained to treat customers as if they were in their own homes with guests. Through 17 trips to Montenegro and Europe, he wished to promote contact between Australia and his former home country and, more importantly, these travels also led to his meeting his beautiful wife Olga with whom he shares three stunning daughters, Stefanie, Natalie and Laura.

---

# Mozambicans

– Written by *Fatima de Sousa* –

Mozambique lies on the east coast of southern Africa and has a current population of 24 million. The land is mainly a savannah plateau drained by the Zambezi and other rivers, with highlands in the north. Most people live on the coast or in the river valleys. National reconstruction began in 1992 after 16 years of civil war and currently Mozambique enjoys steady economic growth. Australian mining companies are active in Mozambique because the country is rich in natural resources. The Portuguese began colonisation in 1505 until 1975 when the Peoples' Republic of Mozambique was formed.

World traveling Portuguese explorers and settlers were the first and in our time the last European colonisers in overseas countries. The Portuguese language remains to this day the official language of Mozambique and in addition to this linguistic heritage the continuing presence of Catholicism remain the main cultural features the former colonisers left behind. Few Mozambique-born migrants have settled in Australia. When independence was gained in 1975 permanent residents were given the option of becoming Mozambican citizens. If not, you had to leave within 24 hours and you were allowed to take only 20 kilos of baggage. Many Europeans did not wish to exchange their nationality. They had few options other than settling in Portugal or others Portuguese territories. The capital city was renamed Maputo.

There is no cohesive Mozambican community in Queensland though a few Mozambique-born individuals and families have come here as well as a tiny number of international students. Some migrants are concerned about the increasing outside influence in contemporary Mozambique from neighbouring countries.

Mozambicans are comfortable with Australian multiculturalism because according to the Portuguese tradition of colonising new lands, people mixing with the local population were always taken for granted. Multicultural Mozambicans, at home and when abroad, value education and they love music with an African flavour. Wherever they settle outside of their home country and regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, they continue to cherish their culinary traditions: 'If a Mozambican woman can't cook she will have difficulties finding and keeping a Mozambican

man.' In the home country every region consumes different types of food but there is a common denominator: Mozambicans cook with coconut. Their preferred food tastes a bit like Thai food though it is more strongly spiced with paprika, chili peppers, coriander and garlic. In addition Mozambicans in Australia never desert the sophisticated culinary art of the Portuguese cuisine. They love the Queensland climate and adults commend the clean and well organised ways of Australian life and work. In Australian cities you are rarely confronted with extreme poverty and like most other Africans, Mozambicans never cease to be impressed by Australia's generous welfare system which is run by professionally qualified and caring staff. Thanks to multicultural policies there are few situations of discrimination even if you look different from a mainstream Anglo-Celtic Australian.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

DE SOUSA, Fatima was born in Mozambique. Her father was a railway station master located only 10 minutes from the South African border. She loved learning languages from an early age. Fatima took degrees in commerce and business as well as in administration and management at the Technical University of Mozambique, and hopes to complete an Australian MBA one day. She worked in Mozambique for several embassies, including Japan, Canada, and Italy as well as for Comalco, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). She came to Brisbane following her South African husband who was working for a Brisbane company in New Caledonia and was later transferred to Gladstone. Mozambicans in Queensland love the climate and the laid back Aussie lifestyle.

---

# Myanmar people (Burmese)

– *Written by Michael Po Saw* –

Burma is officially called the Union of Myanmar and shares borders with Bangladesh, India, China, Laos and Thailand. It covers an area of 676,577 square kilometre and is the largest country in mainland South-East Asia. Until recently the capital city was Yangon, known as Rangoon from the time of the British Colonial Administration until 1989. However, in March 2006 the political capital was relocated inland to the newly established city of Naypyidaw. In 2012, the country's population was estimated at 54,584,650 with an annual growth rate of 1.07 per cent.

## Ethnicity

The Burmese population is ethnically complex and is composed of approximately 135 ethnic groups and sub-groups, each with its own dialect, beliefs and customs.

The following are some of the major ethnic groups:

**Kachin (1.5 per cent)** The Kachin reside in the northernmost region of Myanmar bordering India and Tibet.

**Kayah (0.75 per cent)** More than a dozen ethnic groups inhabit Kayah State, a rugged mountain region in eastern Myanmar, but the Kayah people, numbering just over 150,000, are the largest ethnic group in the region.

**Kayin (Karen) (seven per cent)** The Kayin, also known internationally as the Karen, reside in the south-eastern region of Myanmar bordering Thailand.

**Chin (one per cent)** The Chins, or Zomi, are a Tibeto-Burman people inhabiting the great mountain chain running from western Myanmar into Mizoram in north-east India.

**Mon (two per cent)** The Mon, a distinctive branch of the Mon-Khmer peoples, were probably the earliest of modern inhabitants to settle in the plains of Myanmar. They soon established themselves as the most cultured people in Southeast Asia, as shown by their art and architecture.

**Bamar (68 per cent).** The upper and central plains of Myanmar are the traditional home of the Bamar, or Burmese.

**Rakhine (3.5 per cent)** The Rakhine, the majority ethnic group in Rakhine State, have long been influenced by

their proximity to India and have formed strong trading links with the sub-continent.

**Shan (nine per cent)** The Shan are the second largest ethnic group in Myanmar after the Bamar. They live mainly in Shan State, which is the biggest state in Myanmar with a population of over four million and is a melting pot of over 35 races and tribes.

The official language is Burmese and approximately 80 per cent of the population can speak Burmese. The Burmese language encompasses a number of dialects. In addition, many of the 135 ethnic groups have their own language and dialect, and Burmese may be spoken as a second language

**Buddhism (Theravada)** is the main religion, practiced by 89 per cent of the population. Christianity is practiced by four per cent of the people, Islam by four per cent and the remaining three per cent practice Hinduism or animism.

Traditionally, women have enjoyed a high social and economic status and have similar rights to men. Women keep their names after marriage and usually manage the family finances. They work alongside men on family farms and in small businesses.

Traditional Burmese dress varies somewhat from one ethnic group to another. Within an ethnic group there are differences of design, colour and fabric. Burmese women weave colourful designs into fabric which is used to create their traditional sarongs and tunic style tops. The sarongs for men are called 'pasoe', while those worn by women are called 'htamain'.

## The community in Queensland

The first Burmese, who were predominantly Anglo-Burmese, arrived in Brisbane about 40 years ago, largely through the sponsorship of individual families after World War II. Arriving in the post-Menzies and pre-Whitlam era meant that these Burmese focused on assimilation, personal economic development and the maintenance and education of their families. This first generation did, however, associate loosely and most weekends meant large gatherings at houses where Burmese music and food were shared. The food was spicy and the music traditional. The interaction with non-Burmese at these gatherings was limited and confined to social activities. Language was, however,

preserved in this way. For most of the period since then there has been a steady, albeit small stream of Burmese migrants to Australia.

In 1994 the Burmese (Myanmar) Friendship Association of Queensland was formed, and in 1999 the Burmese Buddhist Association was started. The total membership of both associations was less than 100 and active participation a fraction of that. Their objectives were to promote and maintain cultural links within the Burmese community

In 1991 there were 426 Burma (Myanmar)-born people in Queensland. At the time of the 2001 census 11,070 Burma/Myanmar born people were living in Australia, an increase of nine per cent from the 1996 census. However, the population of Burmese in south-east Queensland was still less than 1,000. According to the department's Settlement Database, between the period of 2000-05 a further 1875 Burmese arrived in Australia, although the number of migrants that settled in Queensland was still very small.

In more recent years however, the number of migrants from Burma has increased markedly due to the large intake of humanitarian entrants from the Karen and other ethnic minorities. In 2011-12, Burma's proportion of the total humanitarian visas issued was 14 per cent. Burma was Australia's third largest source of humanitarian migrants behind Afghanistan and Iraq. There are now large Myanmar communities in Logan in the south, and in such suburbs as Chermside, Stafford, Zillmere, Everton Park and Nudgee in North Brisbane.

## Community organisations

With the large influx of humanitarian entrants settling in Queensland in recent years, a large number of Myanmar community organisations have been set up, the majority being along ethnic lines. There are two major Myanmar community organisations that deal with the wider Myanmar community in Queensland.

### The Australian Myanmar Friendship Association of Queensland (AMFAQ)

In order to deal with the large increase in numbers of Myanmar migrants, the Burmese (Myanmar) Friendship Association of Queensland changed

its name to the Australian Myanmar Friendship Association of Queensland in 2007, mainly because the multi-ethnic make-up of the present community in Queensland meant that the objectives of the organisation had to change from purely social and cultural activities for a small group of people to the support and assistance of all Myanmar ethnic communities in Queensland.

### The Queensland Burmese Buddhist Association (QBBA)

Similarly, the Burmese Buddhist Association also changed its name to the Queensland Burmese Buddhist Association and has expanded its activities and established a monastery at 139 Bagnall St, Ellen Grove.

These two organisations, in addition to promoting social activities, regularly organise cultural events to celebrate the various traditional Myanmar Festivals throughout the year.

## Lifestyles and activities

Despite modern changes and globalised cultural blending, Myanmar people have been able to preserve their own lifestyles and activities that have existed since time immemorial. The people of Myanmar communicate in their own language, wear their own style of clothing, relish their own style of food, pray in their own way, play their own games, celebrate their own festivals, receive treatment with their own traditional medicines, and perform their own rituals remaining as Myanmar as possible in every aspect. Many of the life styles and activities are unique to Myanmar people. Although some of Myanmar's beliefs, superstitions, customs and lifestyles have gradually disappeared, many still remain and are cherished and highly valued by the majority of its people.

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE

PO SAW, Michael was born in Rangoon and attended the Methodist English High School. He graduated in Mechanical Engineering at the Rangoon Institute of Technology and held various professional positions in his home town his employers being the Ministry of Transport and Communication, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the British Embassy followed by working as an editor in Bangkok, as a an instructor at a technical college in Brunei and, most recently, as a technical officer for the Brisbane City Council. In 2010 he became the President of the Australian Myanmar Friendship Association of Queensland.

---