



SECTION FIVE:

21st CENTURY DUTCH INTERESTS

Nonja Peters

Four issues dominate Dutch-Australian conversations into the 21st century. From the community perspective these are the preservation of Dutch-Australian cultural heritage; identity and belonging and the second generation; aged-care; and the legacy of the Dutch in Australia. In contrast, the governmental concerns of both countries are world security, trade and bilateral mutual heritage relationships.

From the mutual heritage perspective, in 2012, Dutch-Australian connections were further strengthened when the Netherlands designated Australia as a 'priority country' under its mutual heritage policy. Moreover, it was becoming exceedingly more apparent that Dutch-Australian maritime, military, migration and mercantile connections with WA (that began with Dirk Hartog's visit in 1616), were also providing a solid basis for cultural heritage tourism, which could strengthen the flagging economy left in the aftermath of the mining boom.

The multinational Dutch corporations involved in Australia's mining, oil and gas extractive industries, as well as in Dutch banking and investment, have all attracted Dutch expatriates to Australia. A Dutch school keeps their children up to speed with the Dutch language and curriculum, so they can seamlessly assimilate on their return to the Netherlands.

The Dutch - Australian migrant experience of 'hard work and commitment', has also gained significantly more traction as an expressive and enriching addition to Australia's national narrative. Trending along with the many other Western communities, more Dutch-Australians, especially the second generation, are now delving into their heritage as we prepare for the 400 year *Hartog* anniversary in October 2016.

However, aged-care on foreign soil is an ongoing battle. It is especially sad to end your life in a mainstream nursing home, when illness has robbed you of your second language capacity and you can no longer communicate effectively with your children - who were not taught the Dutch language. However, even when your second language capacity remains intact, your life narrative loses its potency in a mainstream nursing home, as it differs markedly from the life experiences of many of the other Australian residents.

The chapters in this section by Leeflang and Parker, Bly, Cornelisse, Peters, Schwarz, Ingelse-Yarrall plus Peters and Snoeijs, all attempt to interpret and address some of these issues and concerns.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

A SENSE OF PLACE: BEING DUTCH IN WA

Nonja Peters



Figure 1
ADL and other Dutch Newsletters.

This chapter sets out to determine how Dutch migrants accomplished the ultimate challenge - that of (re)creating a sense of self, place, identity and belonging in Australia.¹ For when this seemed impossible, many Western European migrants would eventually give up and just return to their homelands. In fact, between 25 to 40 per cent of British, Dutch, German and Italian post-war migrants are believed to have done just that. This was not the case however for ‘Displaced Persons’, as their countries would remain inaccessible behind the Iron Curtain until 27 June 1989.² A significant number of the Western European returnees would become ‘rollercoaster’-travelling back and forth between home and host-land, leaving members of their families abandoned on both shores. This was a tragedy for all involved [see the Anne Rietveld nee Rijnders story]. Consequently in the early years, any resettlement support provided to these migrants by the Dutch community, was of prime importance to shaping a successful resettlement.

DUTCH SUPPORT FOR DUTCH

In early 1952, a group of educated Dutch migrants, led by Mr. Arriens (the Consul of the Netherlands) as the honorary Chairman, established the Australian Dutch League (ADL). The ADL’s mission was to help any newly arrived Dutch with a variety of resettlement issues.³ During the years when the ADL functioned, a succession of newly-arrived Dutch men and women gained great support from the League. It offered assistance and advice about how to navigate and understand Australian policies, laws, customs, traditions and language.

The League members’ profiles lend support to the claim that ‘Dutch Emigrants to Australia were not always the less educated or untrained people from the lower classes’, although ‘up to the present day in the Netherlands, the emigrants from the 1950s and 1960s are still believed to be mainly farmers with little education’.⁴

A similar observation was made by John Hempel in his 1960s study of the Dutch in Queensland. Hempel recorded a changed trend in the profile of Dutch emigrants coming to Australia that began around 1957. This date coincides with an influx of Dutch leaving Indonesia, as a consequence of the Indonesian government nationalising Dutch businesses. It saw less tradespeople coming to Australia and more white-collar workers.⁵ These immigrants tended to seek more resettlement information.

The ADL committee met at the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) headquarters in Adelaide Terrace, Perth, and hired venues around the city for its various activities. ADL activities included information nights, music and



Figure 2
ADL Kersmis Newsletter.

film nights, dinner dances, literary readings, chess, bridge, tennis, Dutch cultural events, such as the *Oranje Bal* and drinks at the Dutch Consulate to celebrate the Queen's birthday, carnival balls and so forth. Especially popular was the Saint Nicholas Feast that was held at the Perth Town Hall in December 1955 and at Monash House in King Street in 1956 - the latter also being a popular venue for Dutch Community dinner dances. The fact that *St Nicolaas* and *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter) would arrive by boat at the Barrack Street jetty, added just the right amount of authenticity to the event. There was no controversy at that time about the *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter) tradition as being racist. A different spin in recent years has characterised him as a chimney sweep instead of as a servant to *Sinter Klaas* (Saint Nicholas). This is a less controversial way of keeping the story in the loop and yet it being still relevant to the 21st century. In the first two years after my personal arrival in Australia in the 1950s, we children considered ourselves to be especially lucky as our family celebrated both Saint Nicholas on 5 December and Father Christmas on 25 December.-

By 1953, Dutch migrants could subscribe to the ADL newsletter and brochure, which the committee produced to inform non-English-speaking Dutch migrants (who comprised 90 per cent of the new arrivals) about environmental, political, health and social matters of importance to them. They contained practical information including the addresses of organisations, which migrants might need to access on arrival, how to find accommodation, where to store baggage until they had found lodging and where church and Dutch clubs met. Advice was also offered about the criteria required for domestic and commercial leaseholds, how to purchase a property or obtain a block of land to build one's own home, where to have your house designed and where to buy building materials.

The ADL also arranged for English lessons to be taught near to where most Dutch migrants lived. Another significant contribution was its commitment to inform Dutch migrants about the Australian way of life. This included any compliances which newly arrived Dutch needed to heed in respect to the legal system, how to achieve citizenship and gain access to Australian social services: health, the labour market, the education system for their children and for adult education classes, plus how to join a medical benefit fund, how to purchase and license a car and where to obtain travel insurance. They even informed landowners about the need to register their fruit trees with the Department of Agriculture in St Georges Terrace, Perth, in order to help combat fruit fly. On a more mundane, yet everyday level they offered information about the differences between the cuts of meat available at Australian butchers, in contrast to the meat cuts available in the Netherlands



Figure 3
Sinterklaas at Miss Mauds restaurant.
Monique Hill and daughters dressed in
Dutch costume. c.1990s
Courtesy: Grandmother Nell Ottenhof.



Figure 4
English lessons – Schools did not invoke
English as a second language programs for
migrant children until the 1970s. Courtesy:
Battye Library 816B/CA555.

from the same stock animal. In addition, they organised for a financier to liaise with banks who did not know the newcomers, so that they could gain access to venture capital in order to establish a business.

In the same year (1953), the ADL was notifying members from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) that there were three doctors in WA with knowledge of tropical diseases. It made the migrants aware that dental care could be obtained at the Perth Dental Hospital, 179 Wellington Street, Perth, but that it would however be means tested. It beseeched members to organise a Will — especially those who owned property — and persisted in alerting migrants to join a health scheme, as a way to amortise huge hospitalisation costs. In August 1953, the basic wage was around £12 per week and hospital costs ranged from between £10/10/- to £12/5/- per week in a public hospital, and from £14 to £35 per week in a private hospital.⁶

For leisure activities, the ADL organised cultural and educational gatherings that would enlighten; for example it would provide information about free concerts given by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. It also advised readers not to throw away their old newsletters, as the ‘Catholic Club for Seafarers’ in Fremantle would be very pleased to receive them. The ADL catered for classical music buffs by sponsoring opera nights, for which Mr and Mrs Pennock of Peppermint Grove, willingly offered their home as a venue.⁷

In 1953, W Arriens, Mr J Scheeren and Mr HP de Groot of the ADL executive attended the first Good Neighbour Council (GNC) regional conference, held in Western Australia at Point Walter migrant hostel. The conference, which was opened by the then Premier A R G Hawke, prioritised migrants’ resettlement issues - accommodation, language, employment, assimilation and naturalisation, as well as the need to entice more female migrants to Australia in order to achieve a better gender balance, as this would improve male morale.

The calibre of the ADL executive membership inspired local clubs such as the Goodwill League and the very traditional Royal WA Historical Society (RWAHS), to invite the club’s executive to presentation evenings. In 1955, the ADL newsletter made specific mention of a reading from the *Diary of Frans Pelsaert* by Henrietta Drake-Brockman. *Pelsaert* was skipper of the doomed *Batavia* that floundered on the Abrolhos Islands off the coast of WA in 1629. The combined information sources provided by Drake-Brockman’s book - which in turn relied heavily on the translation of *Pelsaert’s Journal* by Dirk Drok, a Dutch migrant from the NEI - both helped to identify the area where the wreck was eventually found in the 1960s by Max Cramer, Hugh Edwards and other individuals of Geraldton [see Drok vignette by Summers].⁸ Until Drok’s arrival, the only other reference was the earlier translation of the *Ongeluckige Voyagie* by *Willem Siebenhaar*, who had also translated *Max Havelaar* into English. Its foreword by D.H.Lawrence describes it as a work of genius.

Under the auspices of the ADL, a carnival, soccer and Dutch women's social clubs were also established. In addition it ran a loan library of Dutch books from the YWCA headquarters in Adelaide Terrace. This opened every Saturday morning and during the 'interval' at some Dutch events. The joining fee was two shillings and it cost three pence per book loan. By January 1956, the ADL was affiliated with: The Dutch women's *Handwerk* [craft] Club; the Repertory club *Elckerlijck*⁹ established by Frans Hock (in Maniana and G. Sapelli); the *Nederlandse Volksdangroep* [Dutch folk dance group]; as well as the Windmills Soccer Club. By 1955, all were advertising their events in the ADL newsletter, and in the case of the soccer club, also their dinner dances held at the Aquatic Club and Riverside Drive Hotel. The ADL newsletter also advertised the church services and venues of all relevant denominations under 'Church News' [*Kerknieuws*].

Dutch ex-service men and women established specific associations to celebrate significant events and to facilitate friendship among people with similar experiences. The Netherlands Ex-Service Men's Association in WA (NESA) was founded in 1972 by 35 ex-Navy men, who had served with the Royal Netherlands Navy during World War II in the Far East and for whom Fremantle had been their home base from 1942. As time passed, NESA also attracted several Ex-Army and Air Force Personnel into its ranks, including the Ex-*Stroottroepers* of the Royal Netherlands Army. In 1974, the club was officially incorporated and the main aim was to assist Dutch Ex-Servicemen to obtain their overseas pensions. However, as the membership grew to over 300, its interests also included arranging social events for members. Particularly popular and memorable were the once a year 'Tulip Ball', the 'Amsterdam' and 'Indonesian' nights and the New Year's Eve party. During its existence, the venues for its meetings included the *Neerlandia* Clubhouse at Hehir Street in Belmont, the Coolbinia Football Club and the R.S.L. Club Hall in Nollamara. The club is no longer in existence, as most of the relevant generation have since died. However, the men's involvement in the defence of Australia is told in Jung, Eaton and Mays' chapters.

In 1953, the Australia Dutch League (ADL) also established a Kwinana 'Chapter' to cater for the many Dutch employed by British Petroleum (BP) and living in nearby Medina and Fremantle. These outreach groups organised events in their particular areas - even a 'Marching Girls' team emerged. However, in the 1960s, all these clubs merged to establish *Neerlandia*, and by generating funds, they built a clubhouse in Cambridge Street [see the Leeftang and Parker vignette].

In the early years of resettlement, such clubs helped ease the strangeness of life in the new environment. The clubs fulfilled an important function in the emotional resettling of the immigrants, because they enabled newcomers to meet and speak Dutch with people from the same cohort and to exchange information about work opportunities, shopping and schools. They were especially important for women at home, who would rely on their husbands to bring them to the club on weekends, as few first-generation Dutch women



Figure 5
Ageing on foreign soil: These Dutch Australian ladies regularly attend events at the Dutch club. Courtesy: Lianna Parker.

drove cars.¹⁰ Some Dutch clubs also organised group outings that included the beach, Swan River or King's Park.

First generation women also found it difficult to establish themselves as independent identities in the Dutch social clubs.¹¹ This was because most clubs were established on the principles of the traditional Dutch family, which had an authoritarian patriarchal male at its head. Although his wife had matriarchal power, this did not extend beyond the confines of the home. Women therefore always occupied 'subordinate' positions in the club structure; this only began to change when the community started to age. Currently, second generation and more recent arrivals fill leading positions in the *Neerlandia* Club, Associated Netherlands Societies of WA (ANSAWA) and Dutch Care - the aged care organisation.¹² However, the 'Card' and 'Seniors' clubs are still organised by the first generation.

However, not all the Dutch migrants participated in Dutch social club life. Language was an issue within the Dutch community at large, since not all Dutch migrants spoke *Algemeen Beschaafde Nederlands* [standard Dutch]. Many spoke regional dialects or a *patois*, which meant that only those from the same region could really understand each other. Consequently, many Dutch preferred to entertain friends from the same region of origin in their own homes, where they could speak the dialect Dutch language that made them feel most comfortable.¹³

Dutch Clubs flourished in the 1940-1980s, but they declined thereafter. There has recently been a resurgence, and an increase in club numbers mainly for reasons of age care. However, it is noteworthy to mention that according to academic Henk Overberg, Dutch club membership in Australia was never more than 10 percent of the larger Dutch population of any State and this included few Dutch from the NEI.¹⁴

THE INDISCH OR 'OTHER DUTCH' CLUBS

In 1995, Eve ten Brummelaar of Sydney introduced the term 'Other Dutch' to define those Dutch-Australians, who spent their youth in the NEI. In 2001, Wim Willems in *De Uittocht uit Indië*, observed the difficulties posed by the Australian migration agents' fixation on 'outward appearance' - in particular the colour of skin and other external features, as being most problematic during the 1950s and 1960s for this cohort.¹⁵ Consequently, in relation to being able to meet the 'selection criteria' for migration to Australia as noted earlier, the Dutch from Indonesia made up a complicated category, as many were of 'mixed race'. Those Dutch-Eurasians, [with Indonesian or Chinese origins], needed to pass the extra test of being 'light-skinned enough' [see Peters' earlier migration chapter].

It was not until the 1990s, that these *Indisch* Dutch began establishing the separate *Bambu* club. Like the Dutch clubs established in the 1950s, *Indisch Dutch* social gatherings rely on collective memories. However in their case, memories of war under a Japanese oppressor and the Indonesian



Figure 6
Images associated with the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) Dutch culture. Inneke Macintosh's visual diary of her memories of growing up in Java pre WWII. Courtesy: Odyssey Quilts produced by Frances Larder.

Independence revolution in the NEI set them apart from the Dutch from NL, whose war experience was under the Nazis and who tended to dominate the membership at the *Neerlandia* clubhouse. So too did the food served at *Indisch* social gatherings. At *Bambu* events, members enjoyed Indonesian style cooking that included *rijstafel* [a series of meat and rice dishes], plus *Nasi* or *Bami Goreng*, *Beef Rendang*, *Gado Gado* and *Sáte*. These foods contrasted greatly with the pea and ham soup, bread rolls with cold meats and cheese with mustard, beef croquettes, *bitterballen*, *patate frites* and fresh herrings that graced the tables at the *Neerlandia* clubhouse events. Sixty years later, when asked about their food tastes since migrating to Australia, the women in the *Neerlandia* Craft club focus groups said that they were still cooking some traditional Dutch dishes at home. The dish most often mentioned was the *hutspot* - made up of potatoes and a vegetable such as kale or carrots and onion mashed together and served with beef – stewed Dutch style.¹⁶ However, they had also eaten dishes from the whole spectrum of ethnicities which characterises multicultural Australia today, and which is the ‘Australia’ encountered by the Dutch who entered from the late 1970s.

ARRIVALS AFTER MULTICULTURALISM

The Dutch arrivals from the mid-1970s to the dawn of the 21st century also differed from their earlier ‘selected’ compatriots, in that they had to satisfy the Numerical Multifactor Assessment System-(NUMAS) points system.¹⁷ In order to gain entry, they need to fit the age, education, economic and job criteria which Australia currently seeks and that are considered relevant for the country’s evolving and changing economy. A few with financial collateral have also entered Australia as business migrants.

The reasons that this Dutch cohort gave for their emigration from the Netherlands, were often not so very different from those of earlier Dutch migrants. They included wanting to escape the oppressive social system or the restrictions placed on enterprise by the Dutch Socialist Government; the threat of nuclear war and other nuclear disasters; the high unemployment rate (in the 1970s and early 1980s associated with a stagnant economy); and overcrowding. Informants also mentioned removing their children from Dutch ‘social’ problems as another reason for emigrating. The following quote from Robert de Bruin, a flower-grower of note, is typical:

“I wanted to get out of Holland because of its small-mindedness and I wanted to give my kids a better life away from drugs. We were at a stage where it didn’t matter so much where we went, so long as it was away from where people watch each other constantly and interfere with each others’ private lives.”

The destination of Australia was arrived at by the de Bruin family, in much the same way as it had been by earlier immigrants: “We certainly didn’t go to Australia because we wanted to go to Australia. We went to Australia because we wanted to get out of Holland. That’s a big difference”.¹⁸

Among this group there were also individuals, such as John and Elisabeth Hutten, who emigrated because they knew that starting a business in WA was easier than in the Netherlands, and also because they could access a lifestyle in WA which was not available to them in the Netherlands. This couple went on to establish two successful hairdressing salons in a Perth Hills suburb, where they also keep horses. One interesting difference between the earlier and later arriving Dutch business groups, is that the latter are more inclined to help their children enter the Australian ‘middle class’, either by sending their children to private schools or by settling in middle class suburbs. The earlier working class migrants who ‘made it big’, would have ‘generally’ more readily opted for the best house in the street of a working class area - suggesting that the hierarchical *verzuiling* system was still impacting on their worldview.

EXPATRIATES WORKING IN AUSTRALIA

In recent decades, as a result of the mining boom and extensive oil and gas exploration, WA has become host to a significant number of Dutch expatriates, who come to Australia for a few years to work for multinational firms such as *Woodside*, *Shell*, *Asko Nobel*, *Chevron* and *Fugro* - to name but a few. Many of these workers bring their families with them. Although they do attend local WA schools, their children are also kept up to speed with language and the Dutch curriculum through the work of Wilna Cornelisse and her team of Dutch teachers, who established the Dutch school *De Schakel* in WA. The school has recently been taken over by the Dutch Government and is now called ‘Language One Perth’ [see Cornelisse vignette].¹⁹

These recently arrived Dutch expatriates also have playgroups and a business club, yet traditionally there has been little connection between them and the older Dutch community. However recently and to the delight of the *Neerlandia* committee, some of these young Dutch migrants and their children have begun to attend ‘Drinks’ events at the *Neerlandia* on the last Friday of each month. In order to preserve Dutch-Australian cultural heritage before it is all lost and to sustain actual premises and buildings, the clubs continue to need an even greater influx of younger Dutch [see Leeftang and Parker Chapter]. Conservation of cultural heritage was however made difficult by the policy of ‘assimilation’ that dominated in Australia after the post-war cohort of migrants arrived from the early 1950s until the mid-1970s, when multicultural policy was put into operation.

Before leaving the Netherlands to move and work for Dutch companies in Australia, some expatriates today undergo orientation training, which is designed to familiarize them with the socio-economic, physical and emotional environment in which they will have to operate, including customs and traditions. Such pre-migration support helps the expatriates to choose an appropriate suburb in which to find accommodation, schools for their children and so on. Those without this pre-migration service, must find

other ways to negotiate the new environment and they often rely initially on work colleagues.

In response to the question about how she likes living in WA, Maria – an expatriate who came here four years ago with her husband and young family – describes her family's 'biggest challenge' as being the huge distance needed to travel to see her family back in Europe, as opposed to their 'biggest opportunity' - that of experiencing a different country and culture. Like most other expatriates, Maria utilises all possible forms of communication to stay in touch with friends and family overseas - mostly email, video chats and phone calls. She saves to travel home once a year and her parents have also been able visit her annually in Australia. They even try to meet somewhere halfway on a yearly basis too. Her brother who lives in San Francisco has a similar arrangement. This level of contact with family from the homeland was out of the question for earlier migrants. My parents who arrived in WA in 1949, brought out the grandmothers in 1962. However, they were unable to afford to go home until 1974, when my father was dying from cancer.

Maria says she does not have contact with Dutch migrants from the earlier migration waves. Nor does she 'miss' food from the Netherlands, apart from 'Peanut butter', which in any case she can now buy at the 'Dutch shop' in Guildford, but which she usually brings back from the Netherlands herself. She also notes that although she mixes with both locals and other expatriates, her best friends are still Dutch. Some she met here and others she already knew from previous international work locations.

Maria's two children, Willem and Frank, who came here when they were 3 and 4 years old respectively, already spoke English as they were born in Scotland and have an English-speaking father. Consequently this made their transition to WA much smoother than for those children without any prior knowledge of the English language. The children love the outdoor life in WA and all the space and playgrounds. Maria "loves the weather, the camping, space, parks, the ocean, the fresh air, the beaches and the easy commute to work." She also likes the fact that Australia is a sporty, healthy place - at least where their family lives in the 'Golden Triangle' in the western suburbs – the wealthiest part of Perth city, just around the corner from the school and from where they can also see the Indian Ocean.

However, there are also some issues that Maria dislikes about Australia. For example, she finds Australia lacking when it comes to gender equality, especially in marriage. She also deplors some of the negative views voiced by some about asylum seekers, and the car-stickers she often sees displaying expressions such as: 'We drink beer, we eat meat and we speak bl...dy English'.

Maria mentioned feeling very frustrated on arrival in WA by the lengthy and costly process of having her qualifications verified, especially since they had already been translated and accepted as valid in Scotland. However, most difficult to bear are the Government charges for 457 visa holders since 2015 of \$4000 per family, per annum for public education, especially given that

this group already pay in the region of \$140,000 on tax per year.²⁰ For this reason, Maria feels that expatriates are not always made very welcome here, even though they try to integrate into the local community and economy. She has however made determined efforts to become pro-actively involved in her local community, by acting during the last year as Secretary of the P&C Association at her local school.

The response to similar questions from a permanently settled Dutch migrant who married an Australian twenty years earlier, are quite different to Maria's responses. This couple have two children and both are fluent in Dutch and English. She has some Dutch friends and her job keeps her in touch all week with other Dutch people. However, in contrast to Maria, she flies home to the Netherlands only once every two or three years. In the meantime she communicates with friends and family in the Netherlands via email, *Skype* and other forms of social media such as *WhatsApp*. When she goes to the Netherlands, she tries to eat all the food which is difficult to acquire in Australia. She only buys Dutch food in Australia around *Sinterklaas* (Saint Nicholas on 5 December). She likes living in Australia because of the weather, blue sky, outdoor living and the feeling of space, but dislikes the extreme heat, the lack of historic buildings and '*gezelligheid*' (sociability).

Despite the great social and economic difference between post-war migrants and the expats of today, both groups hold in these in common- the passage of time and having other Dutch as their closest friends and also as missing Dutch sociability and a sense of history.

HOW DID THE DUTCH FARE IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY?

The expectations engendered by the Australian ideology of assimilation, created conflict for both the receiving and relinquishing countries. From the 1940s to the mid- 1970s, newcomers were expected to transition quickly into becoming 'New Australians', by discarding whatever cultural heritage and languages they had brought with them and by integrating themselves instead into the existing social structure: "Australians assumed that the opportunities which mass migration and the assisted passage afforded, would make the newcomer feel obligated to fit in, to learn the language and to adopt the customs and traditions of the receiving country".²¹ Nobody thought about the difficulties this process might present. The over-whelming view was that the past was irrelevant to the new life that migrants would now be forging.²²

Research has shown that *Aanpassen* or assimilation ideology and practices among Dutch migrants are distinctive, because throughout the assimilation period the majority of Dutch appeared willing to conform, whether they considered them agreeable or not. This seemed true at least in the public arena, where they covered-up any social characteristics that Australians defined as 'ethnic'.

In fact, outward conformity to ‘assimilationist dictates’ became the hallmark of ‘Dutch identity’ in Australia. In the public sphere, researchers maintain that the Dutch in Australia, without exception, tried to be more Australian than the Australians.²³ The tendency of an immigrant group to assimilate can also relate to the advantages in doing so. For example, a hierarchical environment in which ethnic groups are clearly ranked is believed to encourage assimilation.²⁴ Considered in this way, Dutch invisibility in Australia could be viewed as a way the Dutch preserved their privileged second place (after the British), on the preferential ladder, as this facilitated access to economic benefits in the Australian market place and to better treatment in the work force.²⁵

Conversely, Dutch sociologists relate the characteristically skilful manner in which the Dutch make themselves invisible in the public sphere, to those traits instilled via socialisation practices in the Netherlands. These practices positively value self-possession and the Calvinist and Stoical values of discipline, frugality, industry, responsibility, obedience and indefatigable allegiance to leaders, regardless of circumstances.²⁶

In Australia these socialisation practices, when combined with the assimilationist dictate, eventually led many first generation Dutch migrants to develop distinctive public and private persona as a strategy for maintaining their cultural integrity. In interviews with the first generation, they discuss their conformity in the public domain, but they report that simultaneously they remained unwaveringly Dutch in the privacy of their homes. This led some social scientists to label ‘Dutch’ as a ‘closet culture’.²⁷

By the 1970s ‘Dutch invisibility’ was generally accepted as the way in which the public and Government viewed Dutch resettlement. For example on 2 February 1978 *The Adelaide Advertiser* noted:

The typical Dutchman who came to Australia and assimilated for all his individualistic reasons, is a man without and out of history. He is ‘strong willed, fast thinking, often stubborn and possessed with a fanaticism to succeed’. (1)...²⁸

Although the assimilated Dutch was a persuasive stereotype, not all members of the Dutch community agreed with it. Many preferred, like the Dutchman quoted by *The Canberra Times* on 13 May 1978 – to believe that the Dutch were the best [of all migrants] at playing the ‘assimilation’ game’.²⁹

The Catholic newspaper *De Tijd* - 1 September 1950 - provides an alternative perspective. It notes:

Only for the man and woman who have given up all ideals of a Dutch home life, and who are capable of putting themselves on the level of the average Australian, is there a chance of success. The authorities in Holland should warn migrants that on arrival in Australia they have no rights, but only responsibilities to become ‘New Australians’ in the shortest possible time.³⁰



Figure 7
Being an Australian: The van Lieshout girls
c 1954. Courtesy: L. van Lieshout.



Figure 8
Sjannie Berens and Nonja Peters enjoying
Australian wildflowers season in bush near
Toodyay, c 1953.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 9
Nell Ottenhof reading Dutch stories to
her Australian born children Anton and
Monique (sitting either side of her) and
a friend c 1963.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.

Figure 10
Poesie Album (autograph Book) created by
NEI evacuees at Fairbridge Farm School.
c1945.
Courtesy: Anneke Slik nee Jongs.

However, when the immigration policy shifted from ‘assimilation’ to ‘integration’ in the mid-1960s, resettlement procedures and processes greatly improved for all newcomers, including the Dutch. This change is expressed in Dutch newsletters at the time. For example, whereas in the decade starting with 1952, the ADL was advising its Dutch membership to ‘assimilate’; during the 1960s the emphasis switched to ‘integration’. This switch is also emphasized in other newsletters; for example, in an article in the *Contact* newsletter of March 1969 entitled ‘Assimilatie of Integratie’, the author urges the Dutch to strive for integration and not for assimilation. He also warns against mixing only with Australians and allowing “your Dutch customs and values to fly in the breeze”, since this would eventually lead to feeling “bereft of background”.³¹ Instead, he suggests that migrants should assess their customs and values against those of Australians, with a view to optimising the best of both in their daily lives.

In the mid 1970s the immigration policy shifted again, this time to multiculturalism. The main principles of multiculturalism were social cohesion, cultural identity, equality of opportunity and notably, for the first time, the Australian Authorities acknowledged and accepted that cultural differences were socially enriching.³² Multicultural policy prompted the many Dutch who came here as children to begin to acknowledge their cultural heritage, and to reclaim the Dutch names they had lost when teachers ‘anglicised’ them at school.

Researcher Des Cahill (2006) describes first generation Dutch as ‘accommodationist’ and the second generation as ‘amalgamationists’. In his opinion the first generation have been allowed to be as Dutch as they wanted to be. The second generation, although proud of their *Dutchness*, were not overwhelmingly passionate as to its salience! Cahill’s perspective is open to debate. My own research with second generation Dutch, (who were children on arrival or born here of Dutch parents), challenges Cahill’s belief that they felt pride in their *Dutchness*. The rescue of their names and culture from the mid 1970s onwards, would tend to suggest that this process only presented as a possibility when Australia had abandoned assimilation and integration and operationalized multicultural policy.³³



The main principles that Australian multicultural society instigated, included social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity. Cultural differences were now to be acknowledged and accepted as socially enriching. Issues of migrants' social and economic access and equity increasingly commanded the attention of government and the general public alike. These changes made non-European migration to Australia possible and enabled second-generation migrants to celebrate their Dutch cultural heritage.

When it comes to immigration terminology, it is still a tricky business deciding whether to use first-generation or second-generation to describe an immigrant. There is nonuniversal consensus and many reputable groups disagree on the usage. Some social scientists also use the term the '1.5 generation' - to describe people who arrived in Australia as children and adolescents. This is based on the hypothesis that unlike their first-generation parents or Australian-born siblings, their identity is split. They are often described as either playing the role of bridge-builder and cultural interpreter by helping parents and grandparents navigate their new home, or they can feel like 'outcasts' - neither here nor there. From a personal perspective as the eldest child in the family, I believe my experience covers both of these positions. However, I am most comfortable with the term 'inbetweeners'. Then again, whatever the label, it seems undeniable that second-generation immigrant experience is a vastly different resettlement process from that of their elders, for it entails tackling a dissimilar range of intra and inter-ethnic opportunities and risks. From an intra-ethnic perspective, the impact of *Aanpassen* ideology on Dutch children and parents affords a relevant example of long-term impact.

The following quote from a Dutch mother, who had pushed *Aanpassen* in reference to her five children's socio-cultural adjustment in Australia, is representative of Dutch stay-at-home mothers: "They all know no better than that they belong here!" However, interviews with migrants who arrived as children, would tend to suggest that the adjustment process for many had not been nearly as seamless as their parents, and especially their mothers, had thought. Interviewees reflected on the dramatic change imposed by migration on their lives, and how migration had not been the result of any decision they had personally made [see Anne and Peter Rietveld vignette]. They also spoke of how migration had forced them to negotiate and communicate in two linguistic and cultural spheres - often at odds with each other and mainly without support from home or school [see Negenman chapter].

Social anthropologist, Herbert Mead would argue that although an individual's awareness of 'self' is always there; it most often exists quietly, causing no problems and its creation and maintenance is a fairly routine process. However under particular circumstances, such as migration [my emphasis], that awareness becomes heightened and conflicted, as the 'self' needs more conscious attention and reflection, in order to cope with unfamiliar attitudes, values, customs, beliefs and language.³⁴

To fully comprehend how well migrants who arrived here as children had handled migration, we added ‘age at arrival’ to Mead’s perception. For example, Marika from Albany, who was a teenager on arrival, talked of feeling highly emotionally charged about coming to Australia. Like the majority of this age group, she too felt extremely angry at her father for forcing migration upon her without giving her a say in the matter. Marika was 18 at the time and in love with a boy of 19. Under Dutch law she was considered a minor until age 21 and so she had to come to Australia. Marika’s 20 year-old sister, thus also a minor and also in love, had to come too. The sister’s young man subsequently followed and they later married. Marika felt, “the chair had been pulled out from beneath me”. At home she was obliged to be obedient to her father. In the mainstream Australian community in Albany where the family were resettling, she felt “like an intruder”, and was “treated like a nobody”. Reflecting on her resettlement, she credits her Australian husband with assisting her to find stability and to put down new roots in Australia. She is happy with her marriage and is very happy with her life.

Many of the younger children coped by denying their *Dutchness*, as more often than not it attracted negative connotations. Research also shows that the Dutch migrant children who grew up in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s, when assimilation ideology reigned supreme, experienced more difficulties settling in at school, than both the authorities and their parents appreciated. The ‘sink or swim’ education policy that prevailed at the time, ensured that once they were enrolled in school they were considered to be Australian children. This attitude enabled education authorities to totally ignore specific disadvantages and special needs, such as teaching English as a second language, and to refrain from collecting overseas-born statistics. Under this system, if a migrant child presented with learning difficulties, the authorities could maintain that the fault lay with the child or the migrant household, rather than the school system’s failure to deal with the specific needs of the child.

The lack of special help with language problems and ‘skewed’ IQ tests both diminished these Dutch children’s chances of procuring higher education and scholarships, and few parents could afford the education fees to send them to independent schools. Moreover in reality, even the enthusiastic application of the euphemism ‘New Australian’ and the ‘anglicising’ of children’s names, did not change the fundamental fact that in the schoolyard, migrant children were really thought of as “reffos, wogs, dagos, spags, kikes, Yids, and Poms” – although the only names actually relevant to being Dutch were ‘Dutchie’ and ‘clog wogs!’³⁵

The ultimate symbol of success at school was to be seen as part of the ‘venerated’ Australian crowd, since everything ‘New Australian’ was considered ‘inferior’ [see Negenman chapter]. The children therefore suffered many hidden consequences and each child had to find ways of dealing with being different. Learning to speak English like their Australian

peers and working to gain good grades were preferred options for some of the children while they were still at school.

The goal therefore for school-aged migrants was to 'fit-in'. In contrast to their parents and older siblings, these school-aged migrant children also grew up in the midst of multi-ethnic migrant communities. A 'pan-second' generation experience emerged, that had them feeling more comfortable among the range of ethnicities that the post-WWII mass migration movement spawned, than in the Dutch community clubs where they were in fact not often made to feel welcome. The *Aanpassen* imperative that Dutch parents supported, gave extra impetus to them finding comfort among their migrant cohort. However, anecdotal evidence would also tend to suggest that children who arrived here aged between 5 and 11, and thus grew up with 'a foot in both cultures', were more likely to suffer depression or other mental illness in later life, compared to their older siblings who were more strongly grounded in their culture of origin.

Settling in the new land was not just about illness nor a break in communication - it was also about homesickness and lack of kinship support networks. Intense emotions typified the first years in the new country, when migrants were at their most susceptible to homesickness because they were still feeling detached from the unfamiliar surroundings. The rate and degree of coming to terms with the 'Australian' way of life also varied between migrants, depending upon gender, national background and social class. From 1950 onwards, State Ministers for Health started complaining about the rising cost of health care due to the increasing numbers of immigrants requiring hospitalisation for reasons of mental, rather than physical care. Although emigration, wartime trauma, torture and dislocation were held responsible for this greatly increased incidence of breakdowns, there was little in the way of specialised treatment to deal with it, nor did the authorities gauge its effects on the second generation. It is impossible to determine the number of people who were affected, firstly because nationality statistics were never collected, but also because migrants requiring psychological treatment, but unable to speak English, did not go to doctors.³⁶ The cost to individuals and families, where members of a family sometimes resorted to alcoholism, domestic violence or suicide, was never calculated. As always it was the most drastic suicide situations, which made the news.

Most Dutch children who arrived here during the period of booming post-war economy when jobs were super-abundant, left school at 14 or 15 to start work. This is reflected in statistics of the time, which showed that the males were generally less well educated than their trades-skilled fathers.³⁷ However, interview data also shows that many acquired the necessary skills at their workplaces, or they later returned to night school to acquire job-related qualifications and self-employment skills sets.³⁸ A high percentage of this cohort worked in sales and eventually became self-employed [see Peters - Section IV].³⁹

Many of these Dutch children were never taught to speak their own language and so consequently most can now only communicate in English [see Pauwels chapter]. How well they do so is also not well understood, given the fact that their family may also have limited English capacity. A lingering thought is the extent to which this state of affairs also impacted upon their family interactions, especially at an emotive level. Personally, I never felt that I knew the Dutch words that would enable me to express my deep emotional feelings to my parents, nor did they seem to know the English equivalents.

A backlash relating to the lack of language maintenance between first generation Dutch migrants and their children became apparent as early as 1961, when grandparents began making their first visits to Australia. The January 1961 ADL newsletter relates the story of grandparents who could hardly wait to return home after a visit to their children and grandchildren.⁴⁰ On arrival, one couple's son who had married an Australian woman, gave each parent a Dutch-English dictionary, telling them that only the English language was acceptable in their home. This couple felt that a barrier had been erected between them and their son, who now seemed like a stranger. Another couple spent four months in WA looking after their three English-speaking grandchildren, while the parents worked long hours in the business. Although not all grandparents had bad experiences, the two different cultures and languages often raised insurmountable barriers between grandparents and grandchildren, which stood in the way of them getting to know one another more intimately. An additional and unexpected disconnect emerged, when the first generation Dutch migrants began to lose their second language capacity due to illness and ageing, and subsequently reverted back to exclusively speaking Dutch.

Dutch households demanded a great deal from their children over and above the expectation of *Aanpassen*. Many handed over entire wage packets to their parents at the end of each week, and were given a small amount of 'pocket money' in return. They were also expected to help with building the family home and if relevant, to work in the family business in the evening or at weekends.

The first-generation Dutch male participants who were interviewed, described how they imparted the socio-cultural and economic behaviours and attitudes of the Dutch work ethic and self-possession, which they wished their children to also follow. Rolf, a first generation manufacturer, began this conversation: "I'm not a believer in protecting my children too much - they have got to make it by themselves, my dad never protected me". Rolf paid a one way trip for his 17 year old son David to go the Netherlands, with the expectation that he would earn his own money over there and save enough to come home. David not only achieved this aim, but returned home 10 months later with a sizeable saving! The expectations that Herman had of his son were not so different:

I have a business producing custom made ...wheels. He [son] is working every night but sometimes on a Saturday. If I also need him and he wants to go out with his girlfriend, then I say,

“No, that girl can wait, when you have finished the job then you can go, you have to help me when it suits me not when it suits you”.⁴¹

A common complaint from this cohort of Dutch-Australian children – male and female – was of feeling jaded by the ever ready critique they received from their parents and the absence of a ‘pat on the back’ to acknowledge their successes.

The issues for Dutch girls were often more closely related to gender bias. Rikki still smarts when she relates how it was in her family, and that her experience was not uncommon in the 1950s and 1960s in Dutch working class families. Rikki noted:

Like all Dutchmen, he [Dad] was arrogant. When he wanted a cup of tea in the morning he would just push the cup out. He expected me and my sisters to fill it without asking. Nobody accepts treatment like that and I certainly feel that there were many times he went overboard. The boys sat at the table drinking, smoking and having fun, while the girls served the meal and did the dishes. My brother Tony had never washed a dish in his life until he got married, and then he did them voluntarily.⁴²

In the 1950s and 1960s, Dutch girls were also expected to start work as soon as was practicable to help the family to financially ‘get on its feet’, and in some instances to enable male siblings to acquire an education. As a result, by the time most working class Dutch girls were 15, they had dropped out of the school system.⁴³ The subservience expected at home (mainly by working class families), played havoc with their self-esteem, especially among their Australian friends. Consequently most Dutch girls felt compelled to hide these aspects of their family life from Australians, who only associated such practices with migrants from middle and southern, and not Western Europe.⁴⁴ Such oppressive childhood practices also engendered a great deal of conflict in cross-cultural marriages, since the women raised in this manner often felt compelled to subjugate their needs to those of their spouse and children. Inevitably this caused a great deal of resentment.

To confront and accommodate these obstacles and develop and maintain an independent identity in this socio-cultural arena, required ingenuity and determination. Eldest children were especially disadvantaged, since they were forced to negotiate a society without a template to follow and, which their parents could not yet fully comprehend. Younger children, watching the conflict that often ensued between parents and elder children who were at odds with one another’s worlds, unconsciously modified their own behaviour to comply with the parent’s wishes, at least on the home front. This sometimes led to major division and even long-term estrangement between siblings, as the younger ones turned out to be favoured by parents for their conformity. Lacking a sense of pride in their own heritage and having to make vital decisions about their ‘identity’, whilst being caught between these

conflicting power sources - home, Australian school and peers - challenged many migrant children's sense of belonging - both at home and in the wider community. Their experience is captured splendidly in Wilma Hedley's poem. It picks up on the vast dissimilarities in the cultural backgrounds of Dutch children compared to locals, as well as in the immeasurable environmental differences that migrant children needed to negotiate, in order to adjust.⁴⁵

*WHO ARE YOU MY STUNTED GUM [TREE]
MIRRORED FLAT IN RIVER'S RUN,
WHO ARE YOU HARSH BIRD OF BROWN,
YOU AGE OLD ROCK AND HILL AND MOUND;
CAN THERE BE FOR YOU AND ME
TOGETHER AN IDENTITY? ⁴⁶*

Some children were able in later life to turn the drive, ingenuity and creativity required to survive the school years and oppressive home practices, into innovation in the market place or academia. Their accomplishments helped ease the upheaval and dislocation the family had endured during the resettlement phase. Their success ratified the migration undertaking – 'to give their children a better life'.

VISITS BACK HOME

Before the obligations of the 'two-year work agreement' had been discharged, migrants soon became aware that building a new life in Australia would entail not only hard work and sacrifices, but also major lifestyle changes. However, by mid to late 1960s, most Dutch in Australia had established a permanent home of sorts. Many well-off grandparents also came of their



Figure 11
Obtaining Citizenship 1960s. Courtesy:
Peters Research Collection.

own accord to visit family in Australia, and prosperous migrants began visiting their families back in the Netherlands. Travel agents took advantage of the increased affluence of these migrants by chartering airline flights and establishing budget-priced trips back by ship [see Leeftang vignette]. Also the financial wellbeing of many migrants had improved sufficiently to enable them to borrow enough money, so they could bring out the grandparents to meet their Dutch-Australian grandchildren. My father paid for both of my grandmothers to visit us.

There are many and varied stories surrounding visits home, which have entered Dutch-Australian folklore. A common story is how the family in the Netherlands perceived 'the visit' as a sign of having made it in the 'promised land'. Consequently they expected the migrant to 'wine and dine' them throughout their holiday. In reality most migrants had scrimped, saved and often borrowed funds to book a passage back to NL, and often they did so in the hope that going 'home' for a holiday, would settle forever the residual effects of homesickness. The return to Australia from the 'home' visit was sometimes the catalyst for them to register to become naturalised here.

CITIZENSHIP

The proportion of those born in the Netherlands, yet now with Australian citizenship, shows a strong positive correlation to their period of residence. Those pre-1976 arrivals, recorded an 84 per cent naturalisation rate against only 34 per cent for those who came after 1976, when the immigration policy had shifted from 'assimilation and integration' to 'multiculturalism' (ABS 1991). However, what the statistics do not reveal is why they decided to become naturalised. It seems that many became Australian citizens for practical reasons: for example, to gain a liquor store or a post office licence, or to avoid having to register a change of address at the local post office — a requirement under the *Aliens Act*. At that time you also needed to be a citizen to be eligible for a pension or a government job and it also made travelling much easier.⁴⁷

Like the decision to leave the Netherlands, the decision to become naturalised was among the first generation, overwhelmingly made by the male head of the family. The women usually supported, consented or complied with their husbands. Most working class women also voted for the political party which their spouse endorsed. The Dutch interviewed from this cohort also tended to believe that their children had no issues about settling in Australia, although when probed, the members of the craft club *Neerlandia*, noted that some of their children had also been reluctant to take up Australian citizenship.

Their internal feeling was that being born Dutch or Friesian, meant that from an emotional perspective you would always remain so, but that functionally since you were living in Australia, you should obtain citizenship and take up the right to vote. Maria Linden believes that wherever you work and live is your country - so her family are all Australians. She described it as where you 'hang your hat, is home'. Some Dutch have never taken up Australian citizenship and neither have all the migrants who came here as children.



Figure 12

The research focus of Nonja, a naturalised Australian, is recording the history of Dutch-Australians. In this photo she is standing near a panel of the State Library of WA exhibition (SLWA): 'Dutch on the Western Edge 1616-2016'. She was Guest Curator of the Exhibition. Image: State Library Western Australia (SLWA) Photographer. Courtesy: State Librarian Margaret Allen.

Those born here of Dutch parents are of course automatically Australians. A few Dutch even 'Australianised' their first or surnames in order to fit in more effectively. There are also extreme, although rare cases of those Dutch who claim they had lost the capacity to speak Dutch after a short time living in Australia. It is unclear as yet, if prejudice was the driver of this perception.

After the naturalisation ceremony they were officially 'Australians', but that was not always how they saw themselves. The sentiments of one Dutch woman I interviewed is representative:

It's 'just a piece of paper' but it did not change how I felt inside. On the outside I was an Aussie but on the inside I stayed very Dutch, you can't escape your early years, your *Dutchness*, it is all you know.⁴⁸

The better educated Dutch were more inclined to question the implications and benefits associated with the acquisition of Australian citizenship.⁴⁹ Marie, for instance, traded Australian political rights to retain Dutch citizenship because:

I am still Dutch, I feel Dutch, I like to feel Dutch. ...lots of people have become Australian citizens because of jobs or because their children wanted it. My husband was a businessman and we didn't have to become 'Australian' to survive.... My son and my daughter are self-employed. What more can the Australian Government ask of us?⁵⁰

After 1994, migrants were much happier about being naturalized, when the pledge to renounce all former alliances and proclaim allegiance to the British Queen was replaced by the 'Pledge of Commitment as a Citizen to Australia':



Figure 13

Nonja in Kindergarten -Tilburg - The Netherlands-1949
Courtesy: Nonja Peters.

From this time forward, *under God*,* I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.⁵¹

Inevitably therefore, the move from *Dutchness* to presenting as Australian was not as seamless as the label the ‘Invisible Dutch’ would indicate. The image of the Dutch immigrant which is held by Dutch people as well as Australians, is an ideal image and it corresponds to what the Australian and Dutch governments expected of the immigrants. This stereotypical image is based on the assumption that Dutch immigrants have little interpersonal contact among themselves and live scattered all over the country; and in the belief that they have adapted so well, that they have become mainstream Australians. It is true that in general they tried to behave as ‘ideal’ immigrants and gained a fair-to-good command of the English language. This was made easier by the two languages’ close linguistic ties [see Pauwels’ chapter], and by the lack of many striking physical differences between European Australians and European Dutch, that characterised the early post war years.

AGED DUTCH

Having spent the largest part of their lives in Australia, most of the older Dutch tend to describe themselves as ‘Dutch-Australians’. Some fifty years later, in conversations with Dutch-Australian aged pensioners about their relationship with Australians, most generally note that they had relationships with their work colleagues throughout their working life. However they say that their closest friends were and still remain, other Dutch, especially people from their own region of origin and whom they had met on the ship when they migrated. These individuals, in the absence of any extended family, had accepted the role of surrogate aunt, uncle or cousin to their children.

The elderly Dutch also noted that, despite having adopted many Australian attitudes, they had remained connected to their Dutch identity in many respects, gaining succour from the familiar and the distinctive ‘*gezelligheid*’ (conviviality), which it embraced. In the process, they came to realise the extent to which they were still Dutch, no matter how assimilated they had believed themselves to be, and the extent to which they had suppressed their Dutch identity in order to work and live among Anglo-Australians. As one man noted: “On retirement I left my Australian friends at the office when I closed the door behind me.” The assessment differed however for Dutch women. Since few had been in the workforce, they continued to value their neighbours’ friendship into old age, although their best friends were drawn predominantly from their Dutch cohort. However, in summing up their migrant experience, the general consensus among these women was that the first years were very difficult and that most had often felt like going back to NL, until they had mastered enough of the English language to function in the new society.

Since the turn of the 21st century we have observed a rapid growth in the numbers of the Dutch Aged, followed more recently of course by a decline in



Figure 14
The Dutch shop in Guildford, 2016.
Courtesy; Nicola Coles.

numbers. According to demographic projections, the numbers of the Dutch who are 60 years and over in Australia peaked at over 50,000 in the first half of the 2010s.⁵² Demographers claim the proportion of Dutch aged 75 years and over could remain around one third in the present decade, and rise to 45 per cent in 2021 and to 73 per cent in 2031. The difference between these and the earlier cohorts is that they are mainly those Dutch who were children on arrival, and that they entered the Australian work force or school system. This category of Dutch can readily negotiate with other Dutch and with Australian and other migrant networks.⁵³

Aged-care on foreign soil is an ongoing battle. It can be especially sad to end ones' life in a mainstream nursing home, when illness has robbed you of your second language capacity and you can no longer communicate effectively with your children. However, even when second language capacity remains intact, personal 'life narrative' loses its potency in nursing homes, which can be predominated by local Australians residents who are not able to identify with the home and heritage backgrounds of others. In the mid-1980s, a group of younger Dutch met and formed the Dutch Australian Community Service (DACs). They included Deanna Vlam (Chair), Nonja Peters (Secretary), Giel Baggen (Accountant), Adri van der Worm (Fund raising), Siska Zwaan (Member) and with Honorary Consul Mr Thom Dercksen (recently deceased) as its Patron. Over thirty years later DACs, now called 'Dutchcare', continues to function to care for the ageing Dutch population of WA.

A RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

Income statistics show that the Dutch have made a good living here, and that this is also their benchmark as to how they assess their migration [see Peters - Section IV]. Dutch workers gained an excellent reputation as house builders, painters, tool-makers and business people, and Dutch women as first-rate homemakers. First generation Dutch tradespersons were prominent as self-employed contractors and were among the most wanted employees of *British Petroleum* at Kwinana. Some set up and worked in businesses such as *Oosterhof*, *Oorschot* and *Woerlie* and many more established large building and construction firms. Western Australia's largest shipbuilding yards were founded by the Dutch. *ASI Ships* was established in the 1960s by the Verboon Brothers (born and educated in NL). Likewise in the 1980s, John Rothwell, a second generation migrant who was born in NL and educated predominantly in Australia, established *Austal Ships*, which now has large shipbuilding yards in both the USA and WA.

Dutch professionals are currently also employed in management positions as architects, engineers, accountants, health professionals, as well as in local government, town planning, entertainment and academia. The Netherlands-born have also made a name for themselves in the area of Fine Arts such as painting, sculpture, textiles, installations and photography.

Prominent among these are the aerial photographer Richard Woldendorp, Hans Arkeveld, Aatje Bruce, Nien Schwarz, Rinske Car-Driesens and Theo de Koning, to name but a few - there are many more [see Schwartz and Ingelse-Yarrall - Section V].

The Dutch-Australian connections that were celebrated extensively as part of the 'Australia on the Map 1606-2006' commemorations in 2006, are still ongoing. In fact they were strengthened in 2012 by Australia being designated a priority country under the Netherlands' mutual heritage policy. Increasingly more Dutch-Australians are delving into their heritage as we prepare for the 400 years 'Dirk Hartog' anniversary in October 2016.

How might first generation Dutch migrants sum up their *Dutchness*?

Comments from the late Bert Creemers are poignant and representative:

I pride myself on being Dutch even though I have been in Australia longer than I have been in the Netherlands. I believe that in another generation our children will be like the American-Dutch children I encountered in the Netherlands when I went back for seven years in the 1960s. They were making trips to the Netherlands to specifically search for [genealogical] evidence of their family's roots. I believe our grandchildren will be the first to start the trend to become interested in their Dutch-Australian cultural heritage.⁵⁴

Perhaps we are already doing just that, given that the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics show there are currently around 15,000 Australians living in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ The Dutch-Australian maritime, military, migration and mercantile connection with WA, which began in 1616 with Dirk Hartog's visit to our coast in the VOC vessel the *Eendracht*, provides a solid basis for cultural heritage tourism along the WA Batavia coast. The stories of the Dutch migration experience of hard work and commitment enrich both Australia's state and national narrative.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The chapter derives its information from oral history interviews archival documentation and photographs.
- 2 http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Iron_curtain.aspx
- 3 The initial executive committee included Mr Harland, Manager of the Shell Company of WA and Mr Nettleship, Manager of Phillips Electrical industries (WA). Committee members comprised G. Ligtermoet of Applecross, C. Krijgsman of South Perth, Mrs Swarts of Cannington and Nvan Orsouw of Belmont. Assisting the committee were J. Swartz of Cannington and J. Diephuis of Bassendean.
- 4 Elich, J.H., *De Omgekeerde Wereld: Nederlanders als Ethische Groep in Australië*, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1985
- 5 Hempel, J.A. 1960. 'Dutch Migrants in Queensland.' Canberra: Australian National University
Peters, N., 'Trading Places: Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese Enterprise in Western Australia', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia 2000.
- 6 ADL, Newsletters, 1953.
- 7 ADL Newsletter from its inception until it was taken over by the newsletter *Contact* 1969.
- 8 Drok, E. D. (Evert D.) Correspondence, 1973-1985, Batty Library, Library Service of Western Australia (LISWA); Drake-Brockman, H., *Voyage to Disaster*, Sydney, 1963; Siebenhaar, Willem,

- Engeluckige Voyagie (1647), translation of Jan Jansz's account of the 1629 Batavia shipwreck and mutiny on the Western Australian coast. Published by Siebenhaar under the title 'Abrolhos Tragedy' in the *Western Mail* in 1897.
- 9 Pieter Leeftang in an email dated 9 December 2013, noted the name of the theatre group was "Elckerlijck", which is 'Old Dutch and roughly translated into English means: "Everyone likes it "or "To everyone's satisfaction".
- 10 Peters, N, 'Just a Piece of Paper: Dutch Women in Western Australia', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 2000a, 53-74.
11. Intra-ethnic relations in the Dutch community in Australia in the early postwar years emulated the cleavages in Dutch society. Differentiation and club allegiance occurred on the basis of province, religion, class and gender; Overberg, H., 'The Dutch in Australia' in James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People*, 1988.
- 12 Dutch working class parents' failure to pass on their language to their children keeps the second generation away from Dutch organisations.
- 13 Peters, 2000.
- 14 Overberg, H., 'Dutch Communal Life in Victoria', in Nonja Peters (ed) *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006* (Perth 2006).
- 15 Willems, W., *De Iuttocht uit Indie 1945-1995*, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 2001.
- 16 It is interesting to note that historically this was the meal the Spanish left standing when they retreated from Leiden on 3 October 1574. However, whether the ready to eat *hutsplot* (a dish made of carrots, onions, meat and parsnips) they left behind was a Spanish or Dutch dish is a moot point. The Oxford dictionary claims the word first appeared in Dutch records in 1527.
- 17 <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/points-test.pdf>; <http://migrationblog.immi.gov.au/2011/06/16/new-points-test-for-general-skilled-migration-visas/>
- 18 Peters, 2000.
- 19 Pers. Com. Wilna Cornelisse, 10 November 2014.
- 20 <http://www.irishecho.com.au/2014/05/09/wa-govt-scales-back-457-school-fee-plan/31688>
- 21 Reimer, A., 'Between Two Worlds', in J. Lack and J. Templeton, *The Bold Experiment*, New York, 1995, p. 277.
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 De Longh is cited in 'It's the Dutchness of the Dutch', *The Bulletin*, Sydney, 1976.
- 24 van den Berghe, P. *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, New York: Elsevier, 1981, 259.
- 25 Wilton and Bosworth, 1984.
- 26 SWAH & PhD
- 27 Walker-Birckhead, W., 'A Dutch Home in Australia: Dutch Women's Migration Stories' in *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*.
- 28 *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 2 February 1978.
- 29 Walker-Birckhead, W. (1988) Dutch Identity and Assimilation in Australia: An Interpretative Approach. PhD thesis, the Australian National University (ANU).
- 30 van Leeuwen, Hendrik K 'A Retrospective on Dutch Migration to Australia in the 1950s – a media perspective –and the reflections on selected Dutch migrants in Victoria', MA Thesis, School of Visual Performing and Media Arts, Deakin University, Victoria, 1995, 44.
- 31 Contact Newsletter, 1969, p.13.
- 32 Peters, N., *Working it Out: Multiculturalism and the Western Australian Economy*, Exhibition Catalogue, Batty Library 1994, 10.
- 33 It was the Whitlam Labor government who removed the last vestiges of 'race' as a factor in Australia's immigration policies during 1973; <https://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm>
- 34 Mead, G.H., '*The individual and the social self*': unpublished work of George Herbert Mead / edited with an introduction by David L. Miller, Chicago, 1982.
- 35 Peters, N. *Milk and Honey But No Gold, Postwar Migration to WA 1945-1964*, UWA Press 2001.
- 36 Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Sang and Angela Fielding, 'Ethnicity Immigration and Mental Illness: A Critical Review of the Australian Research,' Bureau of Immigration Research, AGPS, Canberra, 1992; The incidence of mental illness among immigrant groups, especially refugees, is higher than among the Australian-born.
- 37 Cahill, D., 'Lift the low sky: Are Dutch Australians Assimilationist or Accommodationists' in: N. Peters, *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, Perth, 2006, 218.
- 38 Peters, 2000.
- 39 *ibid.*
- 40 In the article 'Out of the experiences of a migrant woman'.

- 41 Interview 1998, JL.
- 42 R.B. interview, 1996.
- 43 Peters, 2000.
- 44 Generally Dutch males rather than females were educated or helped into business. Daughters were often expected to help the family by handing-over all their wages. Such practices made it difficult for them to mix with peers who had more dispensable cash.
- 45 Hedley, Wilma, 'Identity', published by Realist, (South Yarra Victoria 1968).
- 46 2010: N. Peters, 'The Dutch migration to Australia: sixty years on' in M. Schrover and M van Faassen (eds) It's Time to Burn the Wooden Shoes in *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*, Year 7, No. 2.
- 47 ibid.
- 48 Peters, 2000a, 10.
- 49 Castles, S., Kalantzis, M., Cope, B., & Morissey M., (eds), *Mistaken Identity, Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Sydney, 1988. In the 1950s to be accepted for naturalisation required a person to: be of good character, have resided in Australia for five years, be able to speak and comprehend the English language and have knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship. Women were most disadvantaged by these criteria as working and non-working woman alike found it difficult to go to English classes.
- 50 M.V. interview, 1996
- 51 Post Migration, No. 99, June 1995, 3.
- 52 Neeleman, P., 'Care of the Dutch Aged in Victoria: Today and Future Options', in Grüter, Benoit and Stracke, Jan (editors), 1995, 97-106.
- 53 Peters, 2000.
- 54 Bert Creemers, interview, 1993.
- 55 DFAT Factsheet, 2013.

Figure 15
Dutch Annex, Australian War Cemetery, Smyth Road, Nedlands. Dutch who died at Broome 1942 are buried there. Memorial Service 2015. Courtesy: Stella Groenhof.

