

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL INDEPENDENT

NATIONAL NEWS SUMMARY

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INDIAN NATIONALS living in a small NSW country town are said to have been living in squalor and been subjected to human rights abuses. These people entered the country on holiday visas and then applied for refugee status. A labour-hire agency then sent them to the small town of Jerilderie where they worked producing tomato products. As a condition of employment they were charged a "job-enrolment" fee of between \$1,000 and \$4,000 and all workers were forced to live in two crowded and dilapidated houses for which they have \$75 a week deducted from their wages. There have been allegations of harassment and sexual assault against their supervisor, Sam Prasad (Sun-Herald 13/01/08).

MIGRANTS from non-English speaking backgrounds are less likely to be volunteers than Australian-born or migrants from an English-speaking nation according to a recent study. Ethnically diverse suburbs have lower levels of volunteering, even among Australian-born residents. Ethnic diversity seems to lead to a withdrawal from collective life and less commitment to the broader social good (Adele Horin, Sydney Morning Herald 11/02/08).

THE LITERACY and numeracy skills of Australian students has not improved since the 1960s according to researchers from the Australian National University (Anna Patty, SMH 11/02/08).

A 25-STRONG crowd of Aborigines, including a 12-year-old child, were involved in an attack on a small group of white people who had been playing cricket on a beach at Geraldton, Western Australia, last Christmas Day. Using a cricket bat and beer bottles they killed 49-year-old William Rowe and seriously injured another man, 29-year-old Luke Neil. Four people were charged over the incident, including two boys aged 14 and 16 (Daily Telegraph 28/12/07, SMH 31/12/07.)

A CHINESE temple in the inner-Sydney suburb of Glebe was seriously damaged by fire in January (MxNews 31/01/08). There were the usual accusations of a "racist" incident.

PADRAIC PEARSE McGUINNESS, editor of Quadrant magazine, died earlier this year. He had been a prolific journalist and had written for a number of newspapers including the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age. He was at one time of leftish persuasion but gradually became more conservative and this was reflected to some extent in the editorial changes that occurred in Quadrant. (Adv + New Con. Rev!)

MIGRANTS working in First World countries are sending up to \$US400 billion (\$A440 billion) back to their homelands every year. Worldwide remittances from those who came from developing nations to work in developed countries are something like \$US276 billion but half as much again is thought to be sent through informal channels. Some Third World nations are probably receiving more through such remittances than through aid projects (Shar Adams, Epoch Times 20/02/08). Meanwhile the government plans to lift the skilled migrant intake by 6,000 to take it up to 108,500. This is in addition to temporary work visas, that are expected to top 100,000 this financial year, and working holiday visas that have reached over 126,000 (SMH 18/02/08). This is no doubt adding seriously to the housing shortage and the fact that our homeless numbers are twice what they were 20 years ago.

A GROUP of Melbourne men had planned a jihad that involved attacks on football crowds and train stations. A total of 12 Muslim men, led by Abdul Nacer Benbrika, faced trial in Melbourne on charges such as being members of a terrorist organisation and preparing for a terrorist act (Norrie Ross, DT 14/02/08).

ADOPTION figures have dropped significantly in recent years. In Australia there were almost 10,000 adoptions in 1971-72 but last year there were only 568. The majority of last year's adoptions were from overseas – 31% from China, 20% from South Korea, 11% from the Philippines and 12% from Ethiopia (MxNews 21/02/08).

A WOMAN was dragged into a car, driven to a park and then raped by two men in the Sydney suburb of Croydon Park. The attackers were described as looking Mediterranean or Middle Eastern (ABC Online www.abc.net.au 25/02/08). If this was a case of a rape of a white woman by Arabs it would be the first reported since the Cronulla riots of 2005.

THE INBOUND tourist market is increasingly controlled by Chinese and Korean firms who are employing drivers who are illiterate in English and cannot read road signs. In 2005 three Taiwanese tourists died when a Chinese bus driver lost control on a hill as he could not read a warning sign saying the hill was too steep for buses (Heath Aston, DT 14/03/08).

VICTORIA Police plan to set up a squad to deal specifically with anti-Semitic attacks and other crimes directed at the Jewish community. Jewish leaders claim that anti-Semitic violence was at record levels last year although police seem to think they were mainly stupid acts by intoxicated individuals rather than premeditated attacks (Richard Kerbaj, The Australian 13/03/08).

A SYNDICATE that forced women into sexual servitude was smashed during a series of raids on Sydney brothels. A brothel in Crown Street, Surry Hills was said to be staffed by Chinese, Japanese and Korean women. Women have been lured from Korea and forced to work up to 20 hours a day. A number of men and women, including a 35-year-old Korean woman, were charged with offences including people trafficking and deceptively recruiting for sexual services (Kara Lawrence, DT 7/03/08, <http://news.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=253498>).

TWO MEN, Ivan Wong and Michael Lee were charged with the murder of a Korean student stabbed to death in a Sydney shopping mall. The crime could be related to a gang called Yee Tong, and formed largely from overseas students. Since September last year 18 people have been charged by the Asian Crime Squad with riot, assault and malicious wounding.

MAXWELL TUVUNIVONO, 27 has been charged with 19 robbery offences after being captured by an employee and two patrons when he tried to rob Caringbah Hotel (22/03/08).

AUSTRALIA'S "Big Four" banks have been borrowing an increasing amount of money from overseas to meet the demand for funds from local companies caught out by the turmoil on foreign capital markets. These banks issued \$32 billion in bonds into overseas markets in the first three months of this year, compared to only \$8 billion for the same period last year. This will more than likely be used as an excuse by the banks for further interest rate rises (Katja Buhner, Australian Financial Review 4/04/08). The influx of overseas sourced funds will also add to our foreign debt and no doubt have an inflationary effect.

CHINESE steel makers are starting to boycott some Australian iron ore products and warn that our producers are jeopardizing iron ore sales by pushing for large price increases. There is the possibility that the Chinese will turn to Brazil as a source of ore (AFR 4/04/08).

FIVE YOUTHS, armed with baseball bats and a machete rampaged through Merrylands High School in Sydney's west, smashing windows and causing injuries to a teacher and at least two students. The attackers are said to have been Pacific Islanders, aged between 14 and 16 and all five of them were arrested by police (news.ninemsn.com.au 7/04/08, DT 10/04/08).

WHITE FLIGHT – Urban and Rural

It appears that more and more white parents are taking their children out of state schools and enrolling them in private schools. This is happening both in Sydney where schools with large Middle-eastern or Asian enrolments are losing pupils of Anglo-European background, and in rural areas of New South Wales (NSW), where white children are leaving schools with large Aboriginal populations. In some cases white children are bussed daily to schools over the border in Queensland. This has been described as something like educational apartheid but there is now a trend for high income Aboriginal families to take their children out of the state school system.

Some Sydney schools say they have no white children enrolled. Tensions rose after the Cronulla riots in late 2005 – many Asian students were scared off from attending school. In Mount Druitt violent clashes have erupted between Aboriginal, white, Pacific Islander and African youths.

In the Western Region of NSW, 33% of state school principals say the proportion of students of Anglo-European background is decreasing, while 41% in Western Sydney report the same.

Meanwhile the indigenous population is growing at three times the rate of the rest of the nation. Many are moving to larger country towns and cities. The proportion living in urban centres has increased from 44% in 1971 to 74% in 2001. Between 1996 and 2001, Broken Hill saw an increase of 50% in its Aboriginal population. In the same period, Orange and Tamworth saw increases of at least 39%. As the blacks move in, many whites are leaving town for good. During this period the non-Aboriginal population of Broken Hill dropped by 5.9%, taking skills, wealth and businesses with them. Meanwhile the influx of Aboriginals leads to increasing ghettoisation and an increased demand for housing, health care, education and policing that is not being met.

Meanwhile in some NSW south coast communities one in four young women have some type of venereal disease. Over crowded housing, domestic violence and sexual assault are common. Inter-state things are no better.

Elders in the far north Queensland community of Aurukun have actually called for children to be removed following a massive breakdown of social norms. Justice, education and child safety standards have collapsed. In one year a total of 763 members of the 1,000 strong population faced court. The recidivism rate among young boys is 90% and one in three children do not attend schools. The community has had two riots so far this year.

A recent article by Helen Hughes highlights the dire situation with regard to education in remote areas. She writes about a community in the Northern Territory that is 200 kilometres from the nearest hospital, police station, high school and Woolworth's supermarket. The community only began receiving television last year.

Sixty or so school-age children have no full-time English-speaking teachers, only an indigenous head teacher and teaching aides who were losing their English literacy and maths skills. Sometimes teachers flew in one or two times a week for a few hours work. Children of 15 and 16 tested have literacy levels equivalent to first graders and have trouble adding numbers above 12. School, when it opens, only operates for two to two and a half hours a day.

Northern Territory Department of Education figures show literacy and numeracy benchmark passes of only 20% in most remote Aboriginal schools.

Part of the reason results are so bad is that lessons are dumbed down to the lowest common denominator; children get bored being taught the same things over and over again. With only two classes in the school there is a wide range of ages in each class. Discipline is poor to say the least.

Hughes found that children from the school have never heard of Captain Cook and couldn't tell Kevin Rudd from George Bush. Scientific knowledge appears non-existent and the

children know virtually nothing about the world outside Australia. They have trouble using a simple pair of scissors let alone more complicated tools. Most could not read a tape measure.

There are many more serious problems with Aboriginal communities and it is doubtful if much of what is being done by governments now will have an enduring impact. Meanwhile the country is becoming more divided racially and there is no reason to expect things to improve.

(Main sources: Anna Patty, "White Flight from Schools" Sydney Morning Herald 10/03/08, John van Tiggelen, SMH 14/03/08, Helen Hughes, "Strangers in Their Own Country" Quadrant, March 2008.)

GITTINS ON IMMIGRATION

Ross Gittins, the Economics Editor for the Sydney Morning Herald had the courage to bring up some inconvenient truths about our immigration program. He points out that net immigration has exceeded 100,000 per annum in 12 of the last 20 years but in only 12 of the previous 200 years did we reach this number. Our intake for this financial year is expected to be 186,000 including refugees and New Zealanders (but not temporary immigrants).

An increased number of skilled migrants are expected to have an anti-inflationary effect as it should help fill vacancies and reduce the upward pressure on wages. As Gittins points out however, the migrants will increase the demand for housing, other goods and services, as well as infrastructure, and this will have an inflationary effect even before the migrants join the workforce. Furthermore a third of migrants enter under the family reunion category and although they will add to demand and inflationary pressure there is no guarantee they will add much to the skills base. One of the reasons housing and rents are going up in price, despite high interest rates, is the excess demand caused by the influx of migrants. Winding back immigration would reduce the upward pressure on house prices. Then there are the environmental problems as the big increase in population will lead to more greenhouse gas emissions.

(Source: Ross Gittins, "There's an Inconvenient Truth about Immigration" SMH, 3/03/08)

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION

In both the 2001 and 2006 Census people were asked about their ancestry and this has enabled us to get a rough idea of the ethnic and racial makeup of our population. The figures are not exact at least in part because those of mixed background can state more than one ethnic ancestry. Nevertheless the following figures, based on Australian Bureau of Statistics figures should not be too far out and give an idea of how certain minority populations have grown between the census years. We have also tried to estimate the percentage of the total Australian population for each group.

Census year	2001		2006	
Chinese	556,554	2.96%	669,890	3.37%
Filipino	129,821	0.69%	160,374	0.81%
Indian	156,628	0.83%	234,722	1.18%
Lebanese	162,239	0.86%	181,745	0.92%
Vietnamese	156,581	0.83%	173,658	0.87%

When completing their Census forms many people simply put themselves down as Australian and quite a few did not state any ancestry. This would make getting a break down of figures for the more established ethnicities even less accurate. Nevertheless while exact figures would not be possible the most common ancestries reported are probably a good reflection of the Anglo-European majority. In order of the proportion of responses the six most common European ancestries are: English, Irish, Scottish, Italian, German and Greek.

(Figures sourced from ABS Website, Cat. No.2068.0 – 2006 Census Tables)