

Australia's Decade of Decision

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**A report on migration,
citizenship and population by
the Minister for Immigration,
the Honourable A. J. Grassby,
M.H.R.**

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Preface

Four great chapters mark the history of the Australian people - the arrival of the original Australians some 30,000 years ago; the arrival of the thousand new-wave settlers with the First Fleet less than 200 years ago; the doubling of the population in the 1850s with the great influx of settlers from many lands; and, finally, the arrival of more than three million migrants from 60 countries since World War II.

We are now in the fifth stage of our history - the search for our national identity.

In this era, the Australian citizen can emerge as a member of a united family of the nation. We can have an Australia strong in its diversity and aware of its rich cultural heritage, or we can have something less. For Australia, this is the decade of decision.

A. J. Grassby, M.H.R.
Australian Minister of State for Immigration.
October 1973

The foundation of Australia is marked by the arrival of the First Fleet on 26 January 1788 and, in taking stock of the nation's human capital today, we should remember that at that time and on that day all Australians were black and the newcomers came from nearly every other continent. Australians have always been a people of rich diversity and the pattern was set by the First Fleet commanded by the man who was to become the founding Governor of the new colonies, Captain Arthur Phillip, who was himself a product of a family with its primary roots in England and Germany.

The Australian people have never been exclusively from one background. The First Fleet - and those which followed - brought English, Scots, Welsh and dissident Irish, and a dozen other nationalities. British gaols - like the Royal Navy - included men of many nationalities. This was our beginning less than two centuries ago. Then, less than one century ago, in fact still in living memory, six small colonies came together to lay the foundation of a united Australian nation.

Today we must move to a new sense of national destiny and a new national unity and to achieve these objectives we must understand ourselves, our history, our heritage. We must know who we are and where we are going as a people.

So our stock-taking must begin at the beginning and span the original settlers who are thought to have come 30,000 years ago, thence to the First Fleet and then to the great decades of subsequent settlement in the 1850s and 1950s up to our present decade of the 1970s. It is a commentary on our inadequate stock-taking and concern for human resources in the past that we are not sure what our original people numbered before the Europeans came. Estimates

range from 309,000 to as high as 1.6 million, depending on our assessment of the effects of a century of sporadic warfare, but at least we know from the 1971 Census that 115,953 remain.

German settlers

The first free settlers after the First Fleet were British but only a quarter of a century after the first free British settlers, proposals were being made that the assisted migration program should be extended to German settlers, the first of many such diversifications.

Even with the inflow of free settlers, Australia's European population grew slowly. It totalled 5,217 in 1800, 33,543 in 1820, 190,408 in 1840. The turning point came following the discovery of gold, and Australia's population trebled in a single decade, rising from 405,356 in 1850 to 1,145,585 in 1869. People came from many countries to the Australian diggings. There were Californian miners, themselves a cosmopolitan group. There were adventurers and seamen deserters from a score of nations. There were Chinese, also, in their thousands. Many of those attracted to the goldfields were ultimately to leave Australia, moving on to fresh adventure. But many more were to remain here.

This is one part of our national history too often ignored or forgotten. Our pioneers, our explorers, our poets, writers and artists, and our scientists have, from the earliest years, included men and women of many nations. Proud to call them Australians, we have tended to overlook the diversity of their birth places. More recent arrivals from these countries are not, in the context of our history, newcomers. Rather, they are part of a proud tradition, the roots of which lie deep in our past as a nation.

A new nation

There were to be other massive inflows of migrants in the century or so which followed the gold rush. But none was to be both as diverse in source and as substantial in size as that which followed World War II.

Just over a quarter of a century ago, a great if sometimes controversial Australian seized, from the aftermath of war, the opportunity to build a new nation. When recently we mourned the passing of Arthur Augustus Calwell, I recalled the epitaph which, in another age, was accorded Sir Christopher Wren, the man who rebuilt London: 'If you seek his monument, look around you'.

Today we are, in truth, a new nation and a new people. Twenty per cent of our 13 million people were born overseas. Twenty-five per cent of the six million children born here since World War II belong to families in which one or both parents were overseas-born in recent years, one-third of the babies born here have belonged to 'migrant' families.

Of some 2.2 million marriages since World War II, over 350,000 have been between Australian-born and overseas-born. Recently, the proportion has risen to between 20 per cent and 25 per cent of all marriages. It is difficult to put a precise figure on this. But it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that one-third of Australia's total population is linked either directly by birth, or less directly, by family or marriage to the history, language, culture and traditions of an overseas country.

National life

There is a tendency to think of immigration solely in terms of the size of the current program, and to ignore totally the influence of those already here on our national life. We have been too long oblivious both to their considerable contributions and to their legitimate aspirations and needs. As Minister for Immigration, I am responsible to those already here, as well as to those who have yet to come. A successful immigration program in terms of settler arrivals does not mark the end of my responsibilities, but only the beginning.

We have, in the past, made some grievous errors. I do not seek to apportion blame. For the most part, we acted in good faith. It was a learning process for us all: for governments, for

the community and for the migrants themselves. But we cannot continue to perpetuate the errors of the past. It will be my particular responsibility to identify those errors, to identify problem areas and, one way or another, to ensure that those errors are not repeated, and that those problems are resolved. It will not be an easy task, and I shall need the goodwill and support of all sections of the community. I should like also to believe that I will have the support of the Opposition in this, because the issues involved are so important that they ought to transcend party politics.

New policies

The Government's new immigration policies have very properly renounced discrimination between prospective migrants on any ground of race or colour of skin or nationality.

The considerations on which our policies are based have been clearly and precisely stated. They include:

- Australia's national and economic security;
- the capacity to provide employment, housing, education and social services;
- the welfare and integration of all her citizens;
- the preservation of our democratic system and balanced development of our nation;
- the avoidance of the difficult social and economic problems which may follow from an influx of peoples having different standards of living, traditions and cultures;
- the avoidance of discrimination on any grounds of race or colour of skin or nationality.

Categories

Within these overall policies, provision has been made for three categories of migrants:

- immediate family members, i.e. the spouses, dependent children, aged or otherwise dependent parents and fiancées sponsored by people already resident in Australia;
- other sponsored people including non-dependent relatives and friends;

- unsponsored people, with or without relatives or friends in Australia, with the qualifications and experience required to meet Australia's national needs.

The highest priority is being given to the reunion of immediate family members. If their accommodation and maintenance are assured, only health and character are taken into consideration.

Other sponsored migrants are assessed on the basis of:

- their economic viability in Australia;
- personal qualities that will enable them to fit into the Australian community;
- medical fitness;
- satisfactory character record;
- their sincere intention of making a permanent home in Australia and joining the Australian family through citizenship; and
- whether they meet a community or national need.

National need

Unsponsored migrants are subject to the same criteria, but their admission is dependent on qualifications, skills or experience which will enable them to meet a national need. Taking into account the numbers of immediate family members likely to seek entry to Australia in 1973-74, the numbers of other sponsored migrants likely to meet entry criteria, the availability of suitable unsponsored migrants and the probable size and structure of Australia's migrant needs during the year, the Government has approved an immigration program of 110,000 for 1973-74. This will comprise 60,000 assisted settlers and 50,000 unassisted settlers.

Reorganisation

In the context of Australia's total immigration program of 110,000 for, 1973-74 certain points require to be made:

- To begin with, this will be the first full year

in which Australia's new immigration policies will be applied. Inevitably, practical problems are going to arise because totally new concepts are involved. In addition, the Department of Immigration is in the process of reorganisation to give effect to these new policies.

- Secondly, Australia has only recently emerged from a sustained period of economic difficulty with limited employment opportunities for migrants.
- Thirdly, the introduction of the new Structured Selection Assessment System is having the intended effect of excluding prospective migrants whose chances of succeeding in Australia are poor. In other words, the proportion of migrants offering who are being accepted is smaller now than previously.

In the longer run of course this, and improved settlement services, will reduce the numbers leaving Australia. It will improve our net gain. I expect settler losses to fall in 1973-74 and thus increase our net gain from the 110,000 program.

Labour demand

With the strong resurgence of the economy, there are obviously going to be increased demands for labour. If suitable migrants are available, if I am certain that they are not being sought just to meet a transitory need, and that they will have an assured future here, then the program will be reviewed.

There are others who, regardless of these considerations, would prefer a smaller intake of migrants. It seems clear, however, that these people have failed to grasp the significance of events which are taking place outside the immigration program. In 1972 for example - I do not yet have complete 1972-73 figures - Australia received 112,468 settlers and 33,172 former settlers left, giving a net settler gain of 79,296. But in 1972, Australia lost 12,709 residents who decided to leave here permanently. We also had substantial net losses on total long-term movements and on total

short-term movements. In total, our non-settler loss amounted to 51,450 in 1972. These losses reduced our gain of 79,296 on net settler movements to a net gain of only 27,846 on total overseas movements.

The implication of these figures is clear: without a substantial immigration program, Australia would face the prospect of having a net loss of people from overseas movements.

This is, of course, only part of a much bigger issue: Australia's future population policies. The immigration program is merely the instrument by means of which these can be made effective.

Crucial year

For several reasons, 1973-74 will be a crucially important year. Apart from being the first full year in which our new immigration policies will be applied, it marks the introduction of policies aimed at improving our foreign relations in the Indo-Pacific region rather than exacerbating them, as was sometimes the case with our previous immigration policies. In addition, at the close of the year - in June 1974 - I expect to receive from Professor W. D. Borrie the report of the National Population Inquiry.

Australia is one of the few countries in the world which is seeking to determine its long-term population strategies, and the National Population Inquiry will make recommendations on the best possible size, composition and distribution for Australia's population at various stages up to the year 2000. It is a completely independent non-parliamentary study into the growth of Australia's population, and it has the widest possible terms of reference.

It is specifically required to take into account the following factors:

- (a) The situation in countries to which Australia is linked through migration, trade, political affairs or geography.
- (b) Contemporary population theories and their economic, social and ecological implications.

(c) The natural growth potential of Australia's population, variations in rates and patterns between different parts of the nation, and the influence of internal and external migration. This includes the Aboriginal population, both in the total situation, and as a separate sub-study.

(d) The impact of technological advance, together with changes in total population, on the usage of resources and the distribution of Australia's population.

(e) Factors bearing on the distribution of Australia's population and the desirability, scope for and feasibility of effecting substantial changes in these distribution patterns.

Public hearings

An extensive three-year program of research is nearing completion and, as one of the vital final stages in the National Population Inquiry, I have authorised a series of public hearings in all States. To date, nearly 200 submissions to the National Population Inquiry have been foreshadowed. Hearings have already been held in three States.

A strong research team has been established for the National Population Inquiry, studies have been commissioned by authorities in various fields, there is a strong Advisory Committee drawn from a wide range of disciplines, and a considerable body of important evidence is also flowing from the public hearings.

Long-term plans

As soon as possible after I have considered the report on the National Population Inquiry which, together with the evidence given at the public hearings, will be a public document, it is my intention to make submissions to Cabinet concerning the strategic objectives of Australian population policy. It is essential that future immigration and population policies should be related to our long-run national interests. They must not be, as so often they have been in the past, essentially short-term responses to changes

in Australia's manpower needs.

In the meantime, the 1973-74 immigration program represents a decision to maintain the widest possible range of options in the short term, and to regroup and consolidate our overall resources in preparation for the far-reaching policy judgments which will need to be made following the report of the National Population Inquiry.

We seek people as settlers and apprentice citizens, not as guest workers to meet some essentially transient need, but to join with us fully in the life of the nation and to make their homes here. More than most countries, therefore, we must be concerned with problems of integration and settlement. The development of post-arrival services for migrants already here - and for those yet to come - must be a matter of high priority. For these reasons, the main thrust of the Government's policies is being directed towards migrants already in Australia and a substantial proportion of the quite limited human resources of the Department of Immigration is being devoted to this purpose.

I would again remind you, in this context, that we are concerned with up to one-third of Australia's whole population, that the Department of Immigration has a total staff of just over 2,000 and that it also has other substantial responsibilities. It is, for example, responsible for the control of some 2.2 million arrivals in and departures from Australia annually.

Counselling

Logically, of course, the process of migrant settlement begins long before the migrant arrives here. Careful and thorough counselling is imperative to ensure that the decision to migrate is soundly taken, and to prepare migrants for the inevitable problems of settlement and integration. It is essential that migrants should be adequately prepared for what lies ahead. The alternative is too expensive both for the individual and for the community. I therefore intend to develop an increasingly professional

migration service to reinforce our activities both overseas and in Australia.

Language barrier

Simultaneously with this drive to improve the quality of the counselling given to prospective migrants, I am initiating measures aimed at establishing more effective communication with those already here. I am concerned not merely to ensure that information, advice and assistance is available to them, but that we should actively seek out those who need help, rather than wait in the expectation that they will come to us.

Too often, migrants do not know where to turn for help. They are frequently isolated by language. They are unfamiliar with our social welfare systems and other services - indeed, this, in the past, has also been true of many Australians. A problem which might have been resolved thus often assumes crisis proportions. But by the time anyone learns about it, it is too late. We cannot allow this situation to continue. We cannot permit the gradual erosion of hope through loneliness imposed by language barriers. We need to improve communication with migrants not only as an insurance against tragedy, but as a positive move towards successful integration.

Language training

English language training is the essential starting point in effective communication, and I have substantially increased the funds allocated for this purpose in 1973-74.

The main elements in the English language training program are:

- child migrant education;
- adult migrant education;
- full-time intensive English-language training courses; and
- pre-embarkation and shipboard instruction.

We are planning expenditure of \$15.48 million - an increase of 65 per cent over expenditure in the preceding financial year. The greatest

increase occurs in the area of child migrant education where expenditure is expected to reach \$10.4 million (an increase of 100 per cent). The bulk of this will go towards the salaries for special teachers to be employed instructing migrant children in special classes in Government and independent schools in all States. The number of special teachers employed is expected to increase from 1,054 to close on 1,500 in the financial year. The number of children receiving instruction in special classes will increase from 40,000 to 60,000 in the course of the financial year.

Inadequacies

Expenditure under the child program includes an amount of \$2 million for the provision of emergency classroom accommodation. A survey of 63 schools of high migrant density in Melbourne, late in 1972, revealed serious inadequacies in both accommodation and the supply of teachers - in effect, inter-related problems. The report showed that only one-third of migrant children in the 63 schools surveyed who were having difficulty with English were actually receiving assistance and, of this one-third, 40 per cent were not receiving sufficient special tuition. In effect, only 20 per cent of the children in the schools surveyed who needed English were receiving enough of it. The basic reason for this situation was the shortage of suitable accommodation for special classes.

Much the same situation has been found to apply in parts of the Sydney metropolitan area and, to a lesser degree, in other States.

The Government decided in May 1973 that provision should be included in the child migrant education program for supplementary accommodation, where this was necessary, as an emergency measure to ensure that migrant children could receive adequate instruction.

The intention is to provide demountable or portable classrooms to schools in order of priority according to: density of migrant children and the location of schools in areas of social deprivation (which together compound

problems for the children and their teachers); the availability of ground space in which classrooms can be erected; and the availability of teachers to take the special classes.

This is essentially an emergency program, and the funds will be provided over a two-year period when the situation will be reviewed in the light of other measures for Australian Government financial support for school buildings. I expect the first class-rooms to be erected in time for the start of the new academic year.

Teacher training

One area to which I have directed that special attention be given is teacher education and teacher training. In Australia today there would be few schools in which there were no migrant children. I believe that all teachers should have training which will equip them to handle classes in which there are migrant children. I want to see included, in all teacher training courses, instruction in the social and cultural backgrounds of migrants, the significance of the immigration program and the composition of the migrant intake, the migrant family and conflicting values and some introduction to linguistics and language teaching.

I would like to see special diploma courses in migrant education developed so that selected groups of general purpose trained teachers can become specialists in migrant education and administrators in the child migrant education area can have the opportunity to acquire advanced, specialised training. Teacher educators will need guidance and assistance.

We need to consider, also, whether bilingual teaching should be introduced into schools especially where there are high concentrations of particular ethnic groups. In the majority of schools in Australia we are faced, however, with a multilingual situation, and I would see the need to know English as a continuing requirement for migrant children.

There needs to be a reform of school curricula

so that at least the major migrant languages and migrant cultures receive the consideration they deserve. Modern languages taught in both primary and secondary schools should take account of the more widely represented ethnic groups in our community, rather than be confined to the one or two European languages which traditionally have been taught.

I have asked that consideration be given to the possibility of a program of integration fellowships so that qualified teachers in the principal source countries can come to Australian schools as fellows or as additional staff members, to assist in the instruction of migrant children. These matters are receiving the urgent attention of my Department in consultation with the Australian Department of Education and by the Committee on Migrant Education of the Immigration Advisory Council under the chairmanship of Dr S.S. Richardson.

Adult education

There have been substantial developments also in the area of adult migrant education. The number of full-time courses at both the intensive and accelerated level have been increased and will provide for some 4,000 students in the financial year. Migrants attending these courses are paid a living allowance, they receive special guidance in subsequent employment placement, advice on receiving instruction at a more advanced level, and encouragement to attend conversation sessions and other informal group meetings to obtain the maximum benefit from their courses of instruction.

We are introducing a home-tutor scheme, to be staffed by voluntary tutors, specifically to reach migrant women at their home. This form of one-to-one teaching will provide a useful integration service and hopefully overcome the initial reticence of migrant women to attend formal classes in the community. The YWCA, the Good Neighbour Councils and the Country Women's Association have all offered to provide volunteers to assist in the scheme.

We propose to market Australia-wide the migrant education television program being produced by the Department in conjunction with WIN Channel 4 at Wollongong. The Australian Broadcasting Control Board has allocated the program the maximum number of points as an education program.

New centres

Migrant education centres are already operating - or shortly will be - in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. These centres provide the administrative headquarters for the child and adult education programs in their respective States, the facilities for full-time and part-time courses and for special classes for migrant women. Some centres will provide the opportunity for migrant children at the secondary level to receive intensive and remedial instruction. The migrant education centres have an important role in providing a focal point for migrant education in all its aspects and I regard their development as a major forward step. The number of education centres in migrant hostels in Australia is being increased to provide greater opportunity for newly-arrived migrants to receive language instruction in day and evening classes, and for children at the secondary level to receive intensive instruction before they pass on to the normal school system.

The pre-embarkation program in migrant source countries is being further developed and expanded and greater use will be made of technical aids and equipment not only in the special classes overseas but at selection points as a means of preparing intending migrants for their new life in this country.

Research projects

We have made special provision this year for expenditure on research projects. Professor Jean Martin and Professor R. Taft will be undertaking research into sociological aspects of child migrant education under the supervision of the Immigration Project Committee of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia.

The Australian Council for Educational Research is commencing work on a test development project with a view to helping teachers appraise the progress and status of migrant children. The test will be directed particularly to obtaining information on the intellectual capability of migrant children, their current confidence in and mastery of English and means for monitoring their progress in learning English. In addition to the direct benefit which the availability of such tests will give to teachers, I see their development as an essential measure in evaluating the effectiveness of the child migrant education program and for controlling expenditure under it.

Migrant settlement and integration activities are also being reinforced. As I announced previously, multilingual welfare officers are being employed to work in migrant communities in all States. It will be their task to go to the migrants, to visit them at home, at work and in their ethnic communities, and offer help and guidance. They will also develop increasingly close links between the migrant home and the school, and help the children to adjust to their new school environment. These newly-appointed welfare officers are culturally and linguistically oriented to a wide spread of ethnic groups.

As well as the Department's own social worker and welfare officer services, grants-in-aid are being made to voluntary welfare agencies to enable an expansion of community social worker services to migrants. The Budget provides the sum of \$370,000 for this purpose compared with an expenditure of \$284,015 in 1972-73.

Increased financial support is also being given to Good Neighbour Councils, whose sustained and nation-wide activities are an important and continuing part of our migrant welfare work. The Budget provides for an amount of \$745,000 in 1973-74, compared with an actual payment of \$618,255 last financial year.

Telephone service

Another important innovation which I announced earlier this year, is the Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service. Essentially, this is for newcomers who have not yet had time to learn English, and is helping to resolve problems before they assume crisis proportions.

The Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service has been operating in Sydney and Melbourne on a seven-day week, 24-hours-a-day basis since February. This service has uncovered a very real community need. Already the number of calls made to the service exceeds 3,500 per month. While many of the calls have resulted from real emergencies, a large proportion of the callers have been seeking information in various areas.

In the light of Melbourne and Sydney experience, the service will be extended to other State capitals as soon as practical.

Much more needs to be done in providing settlement services for migrants and new initiatives will be developed during the year to harness community resources and increase the ability of the Department of Immigration to assist migrants.

At the same time, I have set up task forces in all States to get as quickly as possible to grass roots problems facing migrants. Each task force is chaired by a Member of Parliament with a dual interest in migration matters through membership of the Government Immigration Committee. Other members include National and State representatives and members of the community with a day-to-day interest in migrant welfare.

The task forces were asked to report direct to me on settlement difficulties they were able to pinpoint in the various States. Reports I have received already from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth have been invaluable in drawing to attention problems which require urgent remedial action in addition to guiding me on necessary developments in longer-term

migration objectives.

There has been spontaneous public reaction to many of the recommendations in these reports and I am confident that the community will cooperate in finding and accepting the solutions needed.

Discrimination inquiry

In addition, I have established a Community Relations Committee to inquire into all aspects of discrimination against migrants, to investigate exploitation of migrants and to examine the extent to which migrants use community services. This Committee, with the other three standing committees of the Immigration Advisory Council - on Social Patterns, Migrant Education, and Citizenship - and several specially appointed ad hoc committees and sub-committees, are engaged in a wide range of important migration studies into such matters as the needs of older migrants, the role of ethnic groups in integration, changes in the Citizenship Act and procedures, an inquiry into the balance of the sexes, interpreting and translating needs in the community, and a continuing study of all aspects of migrant education. The Chairman of the Immigration Advisory Council is Senator Tony Mulvihill and he and his 26 members are involved in investigations throughout Australia.

The Committee on Community Relations is led by Mr W. M. Lippmann, himself a migrant, and Chairman of the Migrant Welfare Committee of the Australian Council of Social Service. Other members of the Committee include migrants from Britain, Greece, Italy, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia and leading representatives of national community and service organisations, in addition to others with special experience of value to the Committee. Three meetings have taken place so far.

The views of representatives of ethnic groups and organisations providing community services are being sought on matters of concern to the Committee. Groups in Perth have already had an opportunity to express their views to the

Committee and similar opportunities will be provided progressively in other States.

National stock-taking

These activities are part of what can be best described as a national stock-taking of immigration. My Department, the Immigration Planning, Advisory and Publicity Councils, the task forces and the Good Neighbour Movement are all actively engaged in various aspects of this overall task.

I want, in this context, to re-emphasise the size of the task, and to remind the nation that we are not concerned solely with the 110,000 settlers who will arrive in Australia this year. This is not to minimise either the size or importance of the task of adequately counselling the large numbers of prospective migrants who are interested in coming here, of facilitating the reunion of immediate family members, of assessing the economic viability of other sponsored migrants, and of encouraging unsponsored migrants with the skills we need to come here. It is a global, multilingual operation which involves a complex blending of human, social and economic issues. It calls for sophisticated organisation and management. The co-ordination of transport arrangements, accommodation and job opportunity alone is a complex undertaking.

It is by any standards an important task: important both to the nation as a whole and to the individual concerned. Yet it is only part of the total task with which, as Minister for Immigration, I must be concerned.

Important question

Much is made of overseas ownership of financial capital in Australia. But to me, at least, an equally important question is: who 'owns' Australia's human capital? To what extent do these people 'belong' to Australia? To what extent have we encouraged and helped them to feel that Australia belongs to them - that they are truly Australians, and that this is truly their country? If we discriminate against them,

whether by law, by custom or by prejudice, if we exclude them from our friendship and community activities, if we perpetuate some form of economic or social apartheid how can we honestly expect them to 'belong'?

It is in our national interest to abolish discrimination. It is in the long-term interests of all Australians - and not only the many who suffer in varying degrees from discrimination that we eradicate those things which divide us as a people, and strengthen and build upon those things which unite us.

These are issues which transcend party politics, issues which recognise no State boundaries, issues which bridge generation gaps. What is involved is no less than the future of Australia as a nation and, therefore, the future of each one of us.

Family of the nation

I have spoken on other occasions of 'the family of the nation'. I shall go on speaking of 'the family of the nation' until the message implicit in that phrase is fully grasped and until it becomes the guiding principle for us all. It is not a cliché, but a fundamental objective. Unless we achieve unity of purpose, unless we are joined - all 13 million of us - in a common purpose how can we succeed as a nation?

It is not only a question of ensuring equal economic opportunity for migrants, but of providing whatever assistance is necessary to place them on an equal footing with Australian-born.

The only question that should ever be asked in law is whether a person is a citizen or not. There can be, in future, no first and second class citizens. In the past, indeed, there have been first, second and third class citizens. It is also a question of enabling them - indeed, encouraging them - to contribute to the social and cultural life of Australia. It is not merely a question of helping them to share what we already have, but of encouraging them to add to it, helping them to enrich our national life and

to contribute towards the creation of a new and distinctive Australia.

Search for identity

We are, after all, a prosperous, even wealthy, nation of 13 million, and our people are drawn from more than 60 countries. We look less than formerly to the leadership of others and are beginning to search out an identity, a role, of our own. We are, in fact, in the process of creating a new nation. It is against this background that I have introduced new laws on Australian citizenship which apply without discrimination to people from all countries. It is on this basis also that I have supported and encouraged a new approach to the symbols of nationhood: Australia Day, the National Anthem and the Australian Flag.

It is as well to remember that in terms of citizenship we emerged from our colonial past at much the same time as our regional neighbours in Indonesia, The Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia.

There were no Australian citizens until 1949. The Act which established Australian citizenship for the first time was introduced on 30 September 1948 into the House of Representatives by the first Minister for Immigration, the Rt Hon. Arthur A. Calwell. It became operative in 1949. The first man in history to become an Australian citizen by law was the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. Joseph Benedict Chifley, who received Australian Citizenship Certificate No. 1.

Nation comes of age

Twenty-four years later it was my privilege to introduce in the House of Representatives, on 11 April 1973, the Bill which carries out the greatest reform in citizenship law since that time and establishes our citizenship for the first time on the basis of one criteria, one national allegiance, one citizenship and one ceremony. The Australian Citizenship Act of 1973 means the nation has finally come of age.

This is certainly a long haul from the very first application ever made in the Australasian colonies for local recognition of citizenship sought by those who had come from outside the then empire. The first two applicants ever recorded were two migrants from the United States of America who appealed for citizenship to the New South Wales Colonial Administration. They were granted British subject status in 1825 by special Acts of the New South Wales Legislative Council. (The first was Timothy Gordon Pitman, the second Prosper De Mestre.)

New role

Implicit in the changes and challenges of today is a new and more vital role for the Good Neighbour Movement throughout Australia. I propose to develop my ideas on this in the months ahead in consultation with the Good Neighbour Movement and other community leaders.

While we face a future of great challenge, we also face a future of corresponding opportunity. During 1973-74, our essential tasks will be:

- * to identify and overcome problems which inhibit the successful settlement and integration of migrants already here;
- * to move closer to a new sense of national identity, a greater national unity, which reflects the aspirations and contributions of all sections of the community;
- * to give practical expression to the Government's global, non-discriminatory immigration policies and, in the process, to contribute towards closer relations with other nations in the Indo-Pacific area;
- * to contribute, as fully as is consistent with our other objectives, to the vital labour needs of a buoyant economy and to policies of regional development and urban improvement;
- * to facilitate the work of the National Population Inquiry and to prepare for major

policy decisions following completion of its report.

Action has already begun in each of these fields.

Different people

Finally, let me remind you that we are approaching the last quarter of the twentieth century a quite different nation, a quite different people, than ever before in our history: a new nation indeed.

Within our present population of 13 million people there are strong socioeconomic forces which have not yet begun to work themselves out. We have, as I have already pointed out, up to one-third of our total population who are directly or indirectly subject to 'migrant' influences, either by birth, by family or by marriage.

We have a country in which the comparative youth of its population must be a major factor in socio-economic change. Some 45 per cent of our 13 million people are less than 25 years of age, and 69 per cent are less than 35 years of age.

We have a country whose people travel abroad - and which is visited by people from other countries - to a far greater extent than ever before in its history. Total arrivals in and departures from Australia in 1972, excluding settler arrivals and departures, amounted to more than two million.

Looking abroad

Looking beyond our own shores, Australia is in a part of the world - the Indo-Pacific region - where major demographic, economic, social and political changes are taking place. The whole thrust of events in this region must inevitably reinforce the dynamics of our internal situation. The development of long-term population policies for Australia will, therefore, be one of the most significant tasks we face in the immediate future. It is appropriate, therefore, to turn back to another year of decision, 1945,

when an earlier generation of Australians had the courage - and the vision - to look beyond immediate problems to the opportunities of the years ahead.

The time is drawing close when we, in our turn, will have to make decisions no less far-reaching in their effects than those made in 1945. We shall be looking not just to this year or the next, but to the whole future of Australia through to the turn of the century.

The measures which I have indicated will mean that we shall be as fully prepared as possible to make those decisions.