

# A Handbook

for group coordinators

## Migrant Heritage Places in Australia



Australia has a wonderfully diverse cultural heritage. The places associated with the history of migration, and the contribution of successive migrants to our distinctive cultures and environments, are a part of our shared cultural heritage.





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# Migrant Heritage Places in Australia

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This handbook is also available on the Internet at:

<http://www.heritage.gov.au/protecting>

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# Foreword

Australia has a culturally diverse heritage, greatly enriched by the many thousands of people who have come to live here since World War II. However, the places that are significant in telling the story of the immigration experiences of these Australians are not necessarily well protected, partly because the wider community is not aware of the significance of these places.

The Australian Heritage Commission recognised this problem and funded a project to learn more about Australia's migrant heritage, focusing on post-World War II migration. The project, conducted from 1993 to 1996, aimed to develop better ways of assisting migrant communities to identify their own heritage places - places associated with their cultural traditions and activities in Australia. This Guide is one of the results of the project.

The Commission is grateful to Professor Helen Armstrong for her work in developing the Guide and to the migrant community groups whose members contributed to the testing and refining of the Guide. Our aim is to ensure that the special places associated with our more recent history of immigration are appreciated and cared for as part of Australia's heritage. I hope that this work will contribute to laying the foundations for a wider appreciation of our culturally diverse heritage amongst all Australians.



Peter King  
Chairman

Australian Heritage Commission



## Introduction

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This handbook is a companion to *How to find your heritage places: a Guide*. It is designed to help coordinators of migrant groups by providing additional information and hints on running a focus group, as follows:

- Getting set up
- Running the meetings
- Hints for each meeting

The migration of people from different parts of the world to live in Australia is a significant aspect of Australia's history. The places associated with this history are not generally well recognised by the wider community. **The Guide** has been developed to help small groups of migrants work through a structured but simple process of finding and celebrating the special places that represent the history of their community in Australia.

## Familiar and everyday places

Many people tend to think of heritage places as ancient monuments or grand buildings. However, heritage places might also be humble places, places that are of relatively recent origin, or places that are important specifically to a particular group of people, such as a community hall or a corner shop.

You might feel that the places that are important to your group are not necessarily representative of your migrant community as a whole. *This does not matter.* It is sufficient for places to have value for your group only.

## The importance of sharing memories

By bringing together a group of people who have shared the migrant experience, it is possible through discussions in the group to work out which local places best tell their story of migration and settling into a new country.

Some of these places will be so important to your group that they will want to *conserve* them, or perhaps simply to *recognise* or *celebrate* them publicly. In these ways, their stories can be passed on to future generations of Australians. These are what we mean by migrant heritage places.

**Your role as coordinator is to assist the group to explore their shared memories and information in order to identify the places that tell their story.**



## Getting set up

### The coordinator

The process consists of four meetings that are structured to help the group discuss different subjects and then put the information together in a useful way.

The meetings should be organised and run by a group coordinator or leader, assisted by someone from the group who can make notes and tape record the meetings.

Both coordinator and recorder need to meet between meetings to prepare summaries of each meeting and to identify particular themes emerging from the discussions.

## How to find your heritage places

As coordinator, you will need to:

- have some *knowledge of and a keen interest in your migrant group*. It is assumed that you can bring together a group of about eight to twelve people who would like to talk to each other about their migrant experience and what their heritage is in Australia;
- be able to *get on well with people* and be an active listener;
- have *organisational skills* - you will need to organise the group, find a place to meet, appoint a recorder and keep your own records, control the time of the meetings, make contact with key members in your migrant community and other groups such as the local council;
- be able to *lead and guide discussion* and help the group to resolve any problems they might have during the meetings;
- be willing to find out *what heritage means*. Videos and publications are usually available from the local library, a heritage agency listed in the back of the **Guide**, or you might want to invite a relevant person to help with advice or information;
- be *willing to commit your time*. It will take time to form your group, set up the meetings, work with the recorder between meetings to summarise each meeting from the tapes and time to bring the information together in a useful form.

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## Checklist for coordinator's requirements

- A keen interest in their migrant group
  - Good people skills
  - Organisational skills
  - Able to lead a group in discussion
  - Find out about heritage
  - Time to set up and run the meetings and bring information together
- 

## Forming the group

Groups can originate in different ways. For example:

- the coordinator might select people who know the Australian history of a particular migrant group; these are considered the local experts;
- the group might be a single extended family, or a group of people who have migrated from the same town or region; or
- the coordinator might be an outsider such as an historian or heritage planner, who forms the group by working with the local community development officer or migrant liaison officer, or who is invited by a group to work with them.

If you are a *member of a particular migrant group*, the way you form your group will reflect the particular culture of your larger migrant community. In most cases, members of the group are likely to already know each other or the coordinator.

## How to find your heritage places

If you are an *historian or heritage planner*, there are key people in different migrant communities who can help you form a group. The local community or religious leaders can often provide valuable contacts. As well, community development officers in the local council or the local librarian often know of people to contact in particular migrant groups.

'Umbrella' migrant organisations such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC) in your State, particular migrant organisations such as the Italian CO-AS-IT organisation, or the Australian Chinese Cultural Association (ACCA), can provide contacts with key people in different migrant communities.

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## Hints for forming the group

- Groups function best if they are between eight to twelve people
- Groups may be of one specific migrant group
- Groups may be of mixed migrant groups who shared a particular history eg. working on the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electricity Scheme
- Groups can be a range of ages, eg. elderly migrants and their sons and daughters
- Groups may wish to speak in their own language but records should be kept in English, or translated into English if they are to be used by the wider community

## Inviting members of the group

After you have talked to the people who will be members of your group, it is useful to follow up with a letter outlining the purpose of the meetings, where they will be held, the timing and the program. Explain what you expect to come out of the meetings and why they will be useful contributors.

If your group consists of people from different countries or significantly different parts of the one country, it is valuable to have a preliminary meeting with small sub-groups to briefly explain the project. In diverse groups people are sometimes uncertain about how their experiences fit in with those of other people. Participants can then discuss what they think is their heritage before they join the bigger group.

## Arranging the meetings

### When to hold your meetings

Meeting times should be appropriate for your particular group and their other commitments.

- If the group is predominantly retired people, it is preferable to hold the meetings during mornings.
- Some senior citizens enjoy meeting in the local library during the week.
- Coordinators and recorders, however, may find they have work commitments during weekdays and may prefer to hold the meetings in the evenings.

## How to find your heritage places

- Other groups may find the weekends more convenient.
- Most of the groups who have used the **Guide** previously have met during the day because a number of the participants are elderly and do not like to be out at night.

## Where to hold your meetings

For groups who have already used the **Guide**, the location of the meetings has varied.

- In some cases a room in the local library was used, or rooms provided by the local council.
- In other cases people met in private homes.
- Others met in migrant community clubs or halls associated with places of worship.
- Both the meeting location and times that you choose will depend on your group.

## Form of meetings

The **Guide** suggests that you have four consecutive meetings, each held for two hours duration.

- It is important that these meetings are held at the same time each week for four weeks.
- Weekly meetings maintain the group focus and ability to solve the problem of identifying what is a migrant heritage place.
- Groups should identify important stories and themes about their migrant experience.
- Groups should consider whether these stories and themes relate to particular places. Are these places important as heritage places?

## Recording the meetings

You will need to record the meetings by audio tape or video and handwritten notes.

- In between each meeting the coordinator and recorder will need to listen to the tapes and summarise the points made. This will take time. For a two-hour meeting you will need to allow four to five hours to listen to the tapes and make notes.
- Both the recorder and the coordinator will also need time to discuss the form of the summary that the recorder will prepare.
- Copies of the summary should be handed out at the beginning of the next meeting so that the members of the group can check them and can add any information.

A good way to start meetings is for the coordinator to summarise quickly the previous meeting and explain what questions need to be explored in each meeting and why.

## The role of the recorder

The groups need to record what is said so that the information shared can be built upon at each meeting and kept for future reference.

- The recorder needs to write down all the important points, observe how the group is working, who is speaking and who is not, and check that the tapes are recording.
- It is important that the recorder also keeps clear notes as the tapes may not always be clear, particularly when members of the group all speak at once!
- When people talk over each other, the coordinator should interrupt and ask people to talk one at a time so that all their key points are recorded.



## Equipment and resources

- You will need a comfortable room so that people can sit in a circle.
- You will need a tape recorder with a microphone. If you are using household tape decks it may be advisable to have two at different ends of the room. You may be able to borrow a tape recorder from your local library or from the oral history society in your state library.
- You will also need two one-hour tapes per meeting, that is eight one-hour tapes or four two-hour tapes. Your local council may be able to assist, particularly if a copy of information from the group's meetings is later given to the council in some form.
- It is important to make a copy of the tape after each meeting as tapes can be damaged and each tape will contain important information for your group. As well, heritage organisations and other groups such as the local council, school or your library might like to have a record of your meetings.
- You will need paper and pencils to make handwritten summaries. You may also like to have a map of your country of origin for people to refer to.
- It is helpful to have refreshments such as tea or coffee on hand. Some groups might enjoy sharing some food during their meetings.



## Sources of information

The main information about important events, traditions and places will come from your discussions. However, your group might also bring old photographs, old letters, maps and other memorabilia to help with the discussion. You might also want to use relevant history books for background information.

If you are going to nominate your heritage places to a heritage organisation, or mount a display or exhibition, you can include direct quotes from the group, stories and anecdotes from your meetings, maps, photographs and so on.

## Language

As coordinator you will need to be able to speak English as you will be the interpreter between your group and any organisations or people that your group needs to liaise with. Some of your group may be more comfortable speaking in their own language.

For those who are not comfortable with English, you will need to translate the questions in the **Guide** to your group and translate their responses for the tape recording so that the information is available for others to use. It may help to summarise key points in English as you go.

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## Check list before you start

- Group of eight to twelve people formed and committed to attend four meetings
  - Meeting times arranged to suit group
  - Meeting place organised for four weekly meetings of two hours
  - Transport organised for elderly people
  - Reporter appointed and briefed
  - Tape recorder, tapes, extension cord, batteries for microphone
  - Maps, paper, pencils and pins to mark places on the maps
  - Refreshments organised
- 





## Running the meetings

### What do you want to achieve?

You want to identify places that are associated with the particular history of your migrant group.

You want to determine whether these places are important enough to the group that they would like them to be recorded and publicly recognised in some way.

## How to find your heritage places

If your group intends to nominate their places to your state or local government heritage register, so that they are given public recognition and legal protection against damage or loss, you may want some help to bring all the information together as a *nomination*.

People who can help with nominations include:

- a heritage adviser working for the local council;
- a local librarian or a historian; or
- a student undertaking studies in local history or heritage in your area.

You may like to invite that person to all of your meetings so that they can help you as you go along.

## What do you need to find out?

You need to find out the personal histories of the group. These include the memories of their original country, the reasons for migrating, their migrant experience and the way they settled into Australia.

You need to find out the everyday stories about being a migrant in Australia.

## What are the ways to do this?

You could use *written histories* but this is only going to tell part of the story and you are unlikely to find out about the special, possibly hidden, places that are of great value to migrant groups but are not known about outside the migrant community.

You could undertake a *survey* but this will only give representative information, probably in the form of lists. Although you could follow the survey up with *interviews*, these would only be individual stories.

Instead you will hold guided or focussed discussions between small groups of migrants which will enable us to have much richer information than a set of lists or individual interviews.

Guided discussions are prompted by a prepared set of questions that build up information and give the group an opportunity to contribute on different topics.

The **Guide** sets out these questions.

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Guided discussions give us the depth of information we need to understand which places people think are important and why. They enable people to explore issues and share their memories, prompting stories to emerge from different perspectives.

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## How do we interpret and use the information?

The coordinator and recorder will listen to the recorded discussions and will draw out themes that are relevant to particular groups. From these themes the group will work out why particular places are important and how they reflect specific migrant histories.

The coordinator will need to be actively listening during the meetings in order to pick up possible leads and connections. It may be important for the coordinator to check every now and then that he or she is understanding by saying 'I think you have said... Have I understood this correctly?' The group will need to assist the coordinator in this process by using the summaries and helping interpret the themes.

There are **three stages** in this process.

**First**, the group needs to bring out their particular cultural history and their experiences of migrating to Australia.

**Secondly**, the group needs to discuss their memories. The shared memories are an important part of the process, but in this project they are 'guided memories'. You are trying to help your group reflect upon their history and how this history is related to particular places.

**The third stage** is the most interesting of all. This involves you and your group looking for particular *themes* and *places* in the stories.

## Identifying important 'themes'

A *theme* is a pattern or something that is repeated. Themes will help the group to identify places associated with *different aspects* of their history and cultural traditions.

Look for themes in people's lives which are common to all migrants, as well as themes which are specific to your community. There might be Italian themes, Vietnamese themes, and so on. Then look for the particular *places* that are *associated with those themes*.

Places might include dancehalls (associated with socialising), wharves (associated with working), a special house (associated with finding a place to live), or perhaps a particular garden (associated with growing food, or being with family and friends).

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### Hint

Collect information from your group according to patterns or themes such as:

- a place to live;
  - working;
  - eating and drinking;
  - playing sport;
  - socialising and entertaining;
  - going to school;
  - growing food; or
  - being with family and friends.
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### Examples of themes

One **Lebanese-Australian** group saw their theme as the tradition of the Phoenician traders. That tradition was brought to Australia and adopted in a particular way. Ultimately, Lebanese migrants establishing Lebanese drapery shops and Lebanese heavy-duty clothing factories carried on the tradition of Phoenician traders in Australia.

Another group of **Europeans** from a number of countries, who had worked on the Snowy Mountains Scheme, saw their most important theme as international co-operation, evident in an avenue of flags placed in the Cooma town park in the 1950s.

An **Italian** group in Melbourne saw their theme as maintaining close connections to the production of food and wine, evident in a family business which has produced wine making and food processing equipment for the Italian community for the last forty years.

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### Dealing with problems

How do I deal with people who dominate the discussion?

Listen to what they have said, repeat back a quick summary and then move the discussion on by asking a question of another group member. If the person continues to dominate, humorously suggest that others be able to comment.

When a dominating person answers questions for other people in the group, encourage other people to answer the question. If the person makes things very difficult for others to contribute, you can suggest that other members of the group answer the next question one at a time.

### How do I bring the quiet people into the discussion?

One way to ensure that everyone speaks is to ask that the members of the group go around in a circle and tell their individual migrant history to the imaginary visitor in the room. This means that the name becomes associated with the voice on the tape and will help you and the recorder summarise the meetings.

Quiet people will not be evident until the end of the first meeting. Once you have a collection of stories it will become clear to you where different members of the group can contribute and at these points you can invite the quiet ones to comment.

### What do you do with the people who attend the first meeting with lists of places?

When you are putting together your group you will need to explain that the project is about migrant heritage places. Some of your group may become so enthusiastic that they will come to the first meeting with a list of places that matter to them.

It is most important that such people be able to give this information to the meeting as soon as possible. The list will be useful, but more importantly until the list is given to the group, the person will not be able to fully take part because they will only be half listening while they wait for an opportunity to present their list.

One way of dealing with this is to follow the introductions and individual histories by asking if anyone has brought information to the first meeting that they think is important. Encourage them to present it quickly, thank them for the information, and then explain how the meetings work and indicate where their information will be useful.



## How to find your heritage places

### How does the coordinator prevent him/herself from asking leading questions?

Leading questions are ones where you supply the answer with the question or ask the question in such a way that the answer will be implied. There is a difference between guided questions or focussed questions and leading questions. Guided questions open up a new area of discussion without indicating the expected answers. Leading questions narrow the area of discussion by leading it down a particular track that may be the coordinator's opinion.

In this work, the coordinator's opinion is as important as the opinion of everyone else. However, the coordinator needs to distinguish where he or she is contributing to the discussion as an equal member of the group or when the coordinator is guiding open discussion on various issues.

### How does the coordinator distinguish between rambling speakers who are off the track and those that are supplying valuable information?

This is not easy. It will not become clear until Meeting Two when some of the themes start to emerge. Because the experience of migration is often associated with tragic experiences, the members of your group may need to talk about what happened to them. It may appear to be a rambling monologue but there will be clues in the story and it may also be important for that person to share their experiences.

In many ways the group is like a group of archaeologists sifting through the memories of places and events to find the clues. The clues lie in the stories, even though there may be a lot of information



that appears to be irrelevant. Often an anecdote about apparently irrelevant events that occurred in the original country may provide important contextual information. It might provide a clue as to why certain places in Australia have particular meanings for migrants who have shared experiences of particular landscapes, sounds and rituals.

Other experiences associated with the reasons for migrating, possibly associated with repression, will also provide clues. The difficulty for the coordinator will be controlling the time and also holding the group's interest. The coordinator and recorder need to discuss these issues and develop a sensitive strategy for their group.

### How does the coordinator prevent him/herself from closing off important leads?

Again this is not easy, particularly if you are trying to manage the time. The work that you and the recorder do between meetings in developing themes will help you to remain open and exploratory. You also need to encourage the group to be involved in identifying themes and in interpreting the material. This will make the meetings very active and of interest for everyone participating.

Be careful that you do not develop a strong opinion about where you think the discussion should go. Let the discussion have its own momentum but make sure that it is guided in such a way that your group is working towards the interpretation of their migrant history and how this is reflected in places.

## How to find your heritage places

### How does the coordinator get the group to take equal responsibility for the project and its associated tasks?

The coordinator constantly needs to make sure the group shares the responsibility for identifying the themes and suggesting places that reflect these themes.

In some groups who have used the **Guide**, there was a tendency for the members to feel that they were supplying information for the coordinator to use, rather than working together for themselves.

One way to ensure that the group shares responsibility and ownership of the meetings is to summarise what you have achieved at the end of each meeting and ask for suggestions for information that will be needed at the next meeting.

You may then allocate tasks to members of the group. This may involve asking particular members to get histories from well known figures in the community, find photographs from friends which show how the group used particular places or ask friends for photographs of the old country.

By the end of Meeting Four you should make sure that you have a group of helpers to bring all the various bits of information together.

## Timing and follow up

It is important to keep the meetings to a two hour limit. After two hours people become tired.

Each meeting has been divided into sections. The recommended time period to discuss the topics is suggested in the hints for each meeting. If the discussion is focussed on a particular issue of importance, do not bring it to a close too quickly. Sometimes it is possible to guide the discussion onto the next question without losing the thread.

## After the meetings

After Meeting Four there will still be work to do in bringing all this information together so that the group has a final *product* that includes all their work. This could be presented in the form of a report (see Hints below under Meeting Four).

## How to find your heritage places

You may find that the group would like to undertake further activities arising from the group discussions, such as:

- nominate some or all of the places to a heritage register;
- mount an exhibition using photos and other memorabilia in the town hall, library, school, or other public place;
- make a video;
- write a small booklet or brochure;
- give a talk at the local community centre or school;
- prepare a plan of action for looking after the places;
- place the group's work in the library for other people to use;
- develop a 'heritage trail' for visitors to see the places that are part of your group's local heritage; or
- place information plaques at special sites or make brochures about your heritage available for visitors.

There may be a grant available that will help your group undertake such projects. Check with your local council, library, and community centre. Ask members of the group to help you with filling in the grant application.

If your project is successful, not only will you be helping all Australians appreciate the rich heritage that is associated with the different migrant communities in this country, but it may also be the start of other interesting activities for your migrant group.

## Migrant Heritage Places in Australia



# Hints for each meeting

## MEETING ONE

- The first meeting will be the most difficult. The group members may be getting to know each other and some may find this meeting confusing.
- Send each member of the group a copy of the **Guide** well in advance of the first meeting, so that they can think about the questions in it.
- It is important that that you get the discussion started. You should then allow people to tell their stories while recognising when a significant point has been made that needs further discussion by the group.
- It will help if you suggest to the group that there is an imaginary visitor in the room and that your group is trying to explain their story to this person.
- You are not looking for a list of final places just yet. You will have several lists to help you do this by the final meeting.
- The suggested timing below is a **Guide** only. Make sure you allow time to introduce the project and to summarise the meeting.

## Hints

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### **Introductions** (15 minutes)

Introduce yourself and how you suggest that the meetings be run.  
Explain how, by using the **Guide**, the group will work through a process of identifying their heritage places in Australia.  
Invite members of the group to briefly talk about themselves.

### **What is your cultural heritage and what do you see as your heritage places in your original country?** (45 minutes)

Heritage can be many things - places, objects, traditional events or customs, even everyday things like having a meal.  
When discussing heritage places, suggest less obvious places as well as well known ones.  
Write down a list of places or use separate pieces of paper and pin them on a map of the country.  
Have a map of the group's country (or countries) of origin for members of the group to refer to.

### **Which places in your country of origin would you like to be protected for your grandchildren's children?**

(25 minutes)

Encourage the group to reflect upon whether it is important that their heritage has been kept and looked after or not.

### **What was your experience in migrating to Australia?**

(25 minutes)

Encourage people to think about their experience of migrating:

- their reasons for migrating;
- their expectations;
- their reactions to arriving here.

*Note: The memories of early experiences associated with migration may be distressing for some of your group. You will need to be sensitive to this and give people kindness and understanding if they become upset.*

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## **Summarising Meeting One**

(10 minutes)

To finish the meeting, repeat the explanation you gave at the beginning about how these discussions are leading to an identification of special heritage places.

It is important to give the group a sense of achievement at the end of each meeting and to indicate how they can prepare themselves for the next meeting.

Encourage members to discuss memories during the week.

Suggest that they think about particular events, stories or places before the next meeting and bring their photographs of the old country and arriving in Australia.

## **Before the next meeting**

Between Meetings One and Two you and your recorder will need to listen to the tapes and write up a summary of Meeting One.

Make enough copies of the summary to give to each member of the group at the beginning of the next meeting.

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## Checklist of results from Meeting One:

- a list of points about cultural heritage
- a list of heritage places in the old country
- a list of places in the old country that should be kept
- map of the old country
- tape recording of the discussion
- list of people who attended meeting
- summary of meeting - main points of discussion

## MEETING TWO

At this stage group members should be encouraged to bring photographs of their early days in Australia and photographs of their old country. You will need a record of the photographs, so either borrow the photos and photocopy them or, if they are too valuable to the owners, ask if they would photocopy them. There are photocopiers in your local library.

You will also need some maps for highlighting places as they come up in discussion:

Map 1 - Australia

Map 2 - your city or town

Map 3 - your local area (a street map)



## Hints

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- Introduction - building on Meeting One** (5 minutes)
- Make sure that everyone has a copy of the summary of Meeting One and briefly provide a verbal summary.
- Explain what the group will be discussing at this meeting and why.
- Pin up the lists and other information from the last meeting.
- What was the heritage of your group in Australia before you arrived?** (25 minutes)
- Where there is a long history of a particular group in Australia, for example the Chinese or the Italians, new migrants may have settled in an existing migrant community.
- This history may help you find your themes or patterns. For example, there is a long tradition of Italian stone masonry in Australia and there is also a long tradition of Chinese market gardens. Similarly, the Lebanese community has a history of travelling fabric traders servicing the remote areas in Australia.
- Who have been the special people in your community?** (25 minutes)
- Significant people are an important part of our cultural heritage. The places in which special people have lived are often commemorated.
- There are special people in your migrant community who may be well known as writers or musicians, or spiritual leaders. They may be people who helped the community, such as doctors or scribes who wrote letters.
- What places represent your particular history as a migrant in Australia?** (60 minutes)
- This step will reveal the local history that is the special knowledge of your group. It is unlikely that other people know the details of your migrant history and this is why this project is important.

## Migrant Heritage Places in Australia

A number of important places might be 'hidden' places, known only to the community that created them. For example, the Greek men's clubs – Café Nero – above the shops in inner Sydney and Melbourne, or the houses where Italian men met to form their workers union, FILEF.

These places would be seen as having social heritage significance, both for the migrant community and for the wider Australian community.

Other migrant heritage places might have historic significance where the group may have been associated with a particular event in history which is now finished, such as the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

### **Summarising** (5 minutes)

By now the group should have an understanding of what the history of the group's migrant experience has been, and what places are a part of this story.

Allow time to summarise the places mentioned and any themes and stories that they represent.

Explain that the next meeting will be looking at the group's living traditions and how this is a part of migrant heritage.

### **Before the next meeting**

The coordinator and recorder should listen to the tapes and prepare a summary of Meeting Two.

A copy of this summary should be made for all members of the group.

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## MEETING THREE

This meeting focuses on different aspects of migrant culture, ways of life and associated places. You could suggest that members bring their special foods and music to share at this meeting (or perhaps to all of them!)

### Hints

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#### **Introduction - building on**

#### **Meeting Two** (5 minutes)

Give a summary of the last meeting and then explain what Meeting Three is about.

This meeting will show how migrant groups have been able to bring some aspects of their cultural practices to Australia unaltered whereas other aspects of their culture have changed in Australia.

Try to direct the discussions to reveal the places associated with your *living heritage*. Your living heritage is heritage that is still present in Australia in some form, even though it may have changed.

#### **What are your cultural practices and living traditions in Australia?**

(60 minutes)

Guide the discussion to see how their everyday lives reflect both the culture of the old country and the Australian culture.

One of the most interesting aspects of migrant heritage is the way in which two cultures blend; what is lost and what is gained; what changes and what remains the same. Sometimes the blending involves more than two cultures; for example a Lebanese group in Australia started to use Indian spices in their food because the Indian spice shops were in the same area of Sydney as the Lebanese shops.

The information that comes from this discussion is less easy to see as heritage because activities are usually intangible, but it will reveal the vitality of your migrant community and help to think about special places where they occur.

Where possible the group should try to relate its living traditions to particular **places**, such as houses, gardens, streets, shops, parks, landscapes or monuments.

## **When are the significant events and festivals held in Australia?**

(35 minutes)

It is suggested that the group prepare an annual calendar to see how many of its festivals have been brought to Australia and whether they have changed.

Each festival will be associated with a particular place that may be a migrant heritage place.

## **Summarising** (20 minutes)

By now the group should have a clear idea of what its heritage places could be and an idea of possible themes to help explain what aspects of their history these places represent.

At this stage it is useful to summarise what the three meetings have achieved so that the group is ready to bring all the information together at the last meeting.

## **Before the next meeting**

Between Meetings Three and Four you and the recorder need to listen to the tapes and develop a summary of Meeting Three.

The summary should include the places that continue to reflect the group's cultural practices.

It should also indicate the continued development of themes that reflect the particular heritage of this migrant group.

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### Example

An example of how this process works is the Lebanese picnic.

A Lebanese group who used the Guide decided that a large park near Cooks River in Sydney was a heritage place for them because this is where they continue their tradition of the Lebanese picnic.

Discussions they had in Meeting Three showed them that they were continuing the tradition of the picnic, which occurred in the villages outside Tripoli, in this Sydney park. They discussed the different food they brought to the picnic, how the whole extended family and friends gathered in the park, their music and so on.

This park is an important place with social significance for the Sydney Lebanese community.

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## MEETING FOUR

- This is the last meeting and it requires the group to bring all the information from previous meetings together, and decide how to use it.
- A heritage professional such as a heritage planner or historian can help you with the process of bringing the information together, particularly if you want to assess the heritage significance of the places and nominate them to a heritage agency.
- You will have a set of themes and lists of important places that illustrate the particular history and cultural traditions of your migrant community in Australia.

### Hints

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**Selecting the important places** If the group has difficulty in selecting the places it considers most important, the coordinator could put the places from the different lists on different coloured cards. This may help the group to sort the places in order of importance.

It may also assist the group if they can see how the themes that tell the story of your migrant group are evident in particular places.

**Putting the information together** Gather all the information from the meetings (maps, photographs, information provided by the group, any historical research undertaken, sources of information) and put them into separate files, one per place.

## How to find your heritage places

The **Guide** provides a place record sheet that can be filled in for each place. The place record helps you to keep track of the key information about each place, and present it as a formal record of the group's work. It can be used for a range of different purposes.

Put everything from the meetings together in a small report containing:

- an introduction which explains the aims of the group;
- who the participants were;
- a summary of the meetings;
- the themes and lists of places, place records, and the list of important places selected by the group; and
- any nominations prepared by the group.

Make a number of copies of the report so that you can give a copy to your local library, the local council, the National Trust and the Ethnic Communities Council in your State or Territory.

### **Assessing heritage significance**

If the places are to be nominated to a heritage register, you can use the place records to present the information and the group's assessment of heritage significance to the heritage agency concerned.

The places identified by your group are most likely to have historic or social value.

It is important to visit the places you wish to nominate. This is called field recording. You may be able to get help from a historian or heritage expert, particularly if they also attended your meetings.

## Field recording

Before you do field recording you will need to decide who will do the recording, and whether you need to ask permission to visit the place.

Record the information gathered from field recording in the place record sheets.

Field recording provides the information about today – what it looks like, what is left, what threats it faces. You need to plan your fieldwork carefully.

List the photos you take by numbers as you take them so that you can clearly identify them when the film has been processed.

Consider using sketches and drawings, videos and audio tapes.

Check with your local council and your National Trust to see if the place has already been recorded by others. If it has, take a copy of the recording sheets with you when you visit the place. This will enable you to compare the appearance of the place and to note any changes. It will also help you understand other reasons why your place may be important.

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**Good luck with your meetings. You and your group are making an important contribution to the understanding of what makes up Australia's rich cultural heritage.**

**Should you have any enquiries about the Guide or this Handbook, please write to the Australian Heritage Commission at GPO Box 787, Canberra, ACT, 2601.**



