



The place where thousands of post-war migrants began their Australian journey, Bonegilla represents the shift in immigration policy which led to Australia's multicultural society. This rare surviving example of a basic army hut camp provides a strong sense of what migrant life was like. Bonegilla received Australia's highest heritage honour on 7 December 2007 when it was included in the National Heritage List.

A site of important events

- Block 19 was part of Australia's largest and longest operating migrant reception centre. From 1947 to 1971 more than 300 000 people, mainly from Europe, spent time there awaiting allocation to employment, learning English, undergoing health checks and receiving instruction on the Australian way of life.
- Bonegilla transformed the size and composition of the Australian population.
- After the Second World War, population growth was considered essential, so the government enabled thousands of non-English

speaking Europeans displaced by war to emigrate. This major demographic change transformed Australia's economy, society and culture.

A rare remnant of post-war migration

- A rare surviving example of a post-war migration centre, Block 19 evokes a strong sense of migrant life.
- The 23 buildings and open setting reflect the basic conditions of former war-time army camps used as migrant centres. The symmetrical grid of timber framed, corrugated iron army huts provided staff and migrant housing, offices, recreation and dining halls, kitchens and toilet blocks.
- The style of accommodation offered was basic. There were communal dining and washing facilities and purpose-built recreation halls. Native and exotic plants helped to 'civilise' the place in later years.



A place of social value and strong connections

- Bonegilla is the place where many 'New Australians' experienced the hope, joys and sorrows of their first home in Australia. Today there are more than 1.5 million descendants of Bonegilla migrants.
- An important part of Australia's recent collective memory, Bonegilla offers valued insights into post-war migration and refugee experiences, including Australia's role as the host nation.