



Painting by J. Tierney, 1985. Photograph by Ron Robertson, Sydney Morning Herald, 19 May 1988.

TRADES HALL, MELBOURNE

1 May For the first time, the May Day march in Sydney was led by Aboriginal groups. More than 18 000 people marched on the one-hundredth anniversary of the event, which originally commemorated the achievements of the trade union movement in the nineteenth century. The date was originally adopted by the Second International Socialist Congress, meeting in 1889, as the day on which labour movement organisations should demonstrate for an eight-hour working day. It was first observed in Sydney and Newcastle in 1893. The 1988 celebrations in both Sydney and Melbourne were notable for the wide representation of multicultural organisations.

1 May The Hinkler Bicentennial Air Race ended prematurely when the final leg from

Bundaberg to Brisbane via Kingaroy was cancelled because of bad weather.

1 May Flooding in Sydney claimed five lives and forced 600 people to evacuate their homes.

2 May Delivering the government's social justice statement in Melbourne, *Towards a fairer Australia*, Prime Minister Bob Hawke was confronted with demonstrators demanding that more money be spent on public housing. Hawke stressed the achievements of the government: more than one million new jobs had been created, and capital gains and fringe benefits taxes had been introduced. Hawke also stated that pensions would remain free of tax, there would be greater access to higher education for the disadvantaged, and that the government

acknowledged that too many families in Australia were still struggling to feed and clothe their children.

3 May The full bench of the High Court, in a landmark ruling, changed and clarified the interpretation of Section 92 of the Constitution, upholding free trade between the states. State governments would now have greater powers to impose taxes and charges that interstate traders had previously been able to avoid. The decision also meant that national marketing schemes were no longer under threat and it cleared non-discriminatory state legislation establishing state-wide standards for producers, services and commercial conduct. The decision followed two test cases in 1987, the first a prosecution under Tasmanian law prohibiting the taking or sale of undersized crayfish. The crayfish were caught legally in SA but sold in Tas. The second case involved the sale of cigarettes in Vic for which no licence fee had been paid because they were imported from Queensland.

4 May Queen Elizabeth II officially opened the new extensions at the State Library of New South Wales.

4 May Sixteen thousand people gathered to see Queen Elizabeth II open the Darling Harbour complex in Sydney. Built at a cost of more than \$500 million, the project has been the subject of continued political controversy since construction began in 1984. Critics questioned the financial burden to taxpayers and the credentials of private tenderers for the casino project, which failed to eventuate. There were construction delays and the project suffered cost overruns in the final stages, but the Labor government was committed to having the complex ready for the Bicentenary. Much of the responsibility for Darling Harbour was borne by the then prominent but controversial Labor Minister for Public Works Laurie Brereton who was demoted from cabinet by Premier Barrie Unsworth.

The complex includes an entertainment centre, exhibition centre, convention centre, the Powerhouse Museum and the Sydney Aquarium. The old Pyrmont Bridge has been preserved as a pedestrian link between the inner west and the city, and the complex is served by a monorail, also the subject of continuing controversy.

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip at the official opening of Darling Harbour, Sydney. Photographs by P. Kelly. DARLING HARBOUR AUTHORITY



Darling Harbour with the James Craig under restoration in the foreground. Photograph by Hazel Barker, 20 January 1988. DARLING HARBOUR AUTHORITY

4 May Scientists at the University of Sydney announced that they had discovered a new pollution-free method of disposing of organochlorine wastes, such as the pesticides DDT and chlordane. At present many of these wastes in Australia are stockpiled until a solution to their disposal can be found. Approximately 7000 tonnes of toxic hexachlorobenzene, which is a by-product of plastics and solvents, is stored at one dump in Sydney alone; existing plans to dispose of this kind of waste are by means of a national high temperature incinerator to be located somewhere in southeastern Australia. The new method would avoid polluting the atmosphere, an unavoidable consequence of burning. Instead, the waste would be treated in a chemical reactor which would transform it into a harmless residue.

5 May The report of the Wran Committee on Higher Education Funding recommended that a special 'graduate tax' be imposed on Australians who enjoyed the benefits of a university education. Academic unions and teachers' organisations objected, while tertiary students mounted protests across the country.

5 May More than one thousand people attended a memorial service for yachtsman Ben Lexcen at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney. He died on 1 May aged 52. Lexcen was the designer of the revolutionary winged keel yacht *Australia II*, which won the America's Cup in 1983.

5 May Victoria headed the medal tally after the week-long National Wheelchair Games in Perth. A contingent of 68 people were selected to represent Australia at the Paralympics to be held in Seoul, South Korea, in October.

6 May The 36 international airlines that have landing rights in Australia, including government-owned Qantas, launched a High Court action against the federal government aimed at abolishing the \$5 immigration clearance fee.

6 May The Noonuccal Aborigines launched a legal action in the High Court claiming possession of Stradbroke Island, Queensland. The Island is a popular destination for holiday makers and produces approximately 25 per cent of the world's supply of the rare mineral rutile.



Ann Thomson Ebb-tide, oil on canvas, 400 x 550 cm, 1987. DARLING HARBOUR AUTHORITY

HISTORY

6 May 1788 'On the 6th of May the *Supply* sailed for Lord Howe Island, to take on board turtle for the settlement; but after waiting there several days was obliged to return without having seen one, owing we apprehended to the advanced season of the year . . .

The unsuccessful return of the *Supply* cast a general damp on our spirits, for by this time fresh provisions were become scarcer than in a blockaded town. The little live stock, which with so heavy an expence, and through so many difficulties, we had brought on shore, prudence forbade us to use; and fish, which on our arrival, and for a short time after had been tolerable plenty, were become so scarce, as to be rarely seen at the tables of the first among us. Had it not been for a stray kangaroo, which fortune now and then threw in our way, we should have been utter strangers to the taste of fresh food.'

CAPTAIN WATKIN TENCH OF THE
MARINES

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8 May Queen Elizabeth II attended the Queen Elizabeth Bicentennial stakes in Canberra. The Sydney colt Beau Zam won in a neck-and-neck finish with New Zealand rival Bonecrusher.

8 May A senior member of the Organasasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement), the guerilla movement seeking independence for the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya in west New Guinea, accused Australia of being inconsistent on the issue of human rights in the Pacific by

supporting self-determination for New Caledonia but not for Irian Jaya.

8 May Victoria defeated Western Australia 2-0 in the final of the Esanda Australian Men's Hockey Championships in Brisbane.

9 May Every school child in Australia was given a Bicentennial medallion from the Australian government. (Not all students accepted the medal.)



Top. The Bicentennial medallion and certificate. Above. Aboriginal students Kali (left) and Malu Bellear of Vacluse High School, Sydney, persuade fellow students to hand back their Bicentennial medallions.

JOHN FAIRFAX & SONS LTD

9 May The earliest known painting of St Georges Terrace, Perth, was sold for \$86 000 to an unnamed British buyer. The watercolour, painted during the 1830s, is by Charles Wittenoom.

9 May Queen Elizabeth II opened the new Parliament House, Canberra, on the anniversary of the opening of the provisional Parliament House in 1927.

The decision

In 1923 federal parliamentarians decided for economic reasons to build a provisional Parliament House with an expected lifespan of no more than 50 years. In 1978 Parliament decided to build a new Parliament House on a site that had been selected in 1974.

The site

American architect Walter Burley Griffin, winner of the international competition to design a national capital in 1910, selected the original site for Parliament House — a foothill below Capital Hill, known as Camp Hill. He reserved Capital Hill for a ‘people’s building’ that would tower symbolically over the parliamentarians’ building and embody the aspirations and achievements of Australia. This concept was overlooked by federal parliamentarians in the 1920s and again in 1974. However, the decision to site the new Parliament House on Capital Hill did preserve Burley Griffin’s idea of the parliamentary triangle — the area

1

New Parliament House and its giant flagpole have been described as ‘antiquarian gestures rather than monuments of a new age’ by historian Graeme Davison. ‘In line with the general tendency of postmodern architecture, it appropriates historical symbols in an essentially unhistorical way, playfully exaggerating and distorting them for architectural effect . . .’ Photograph by Stephen Hall.

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The gracious low-style buildings of the provisional Parliament House.

WELDON TRANNIES

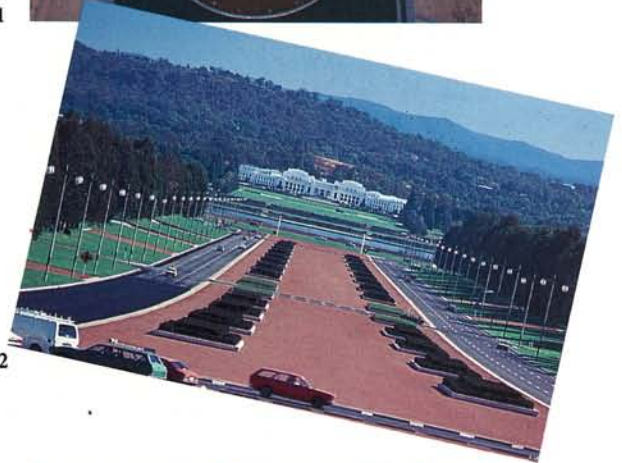
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Charles Perkins, head of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, with Aboriginal demonstrators and their supporters at new Parliament House. Photograph by J. Houldsworth.

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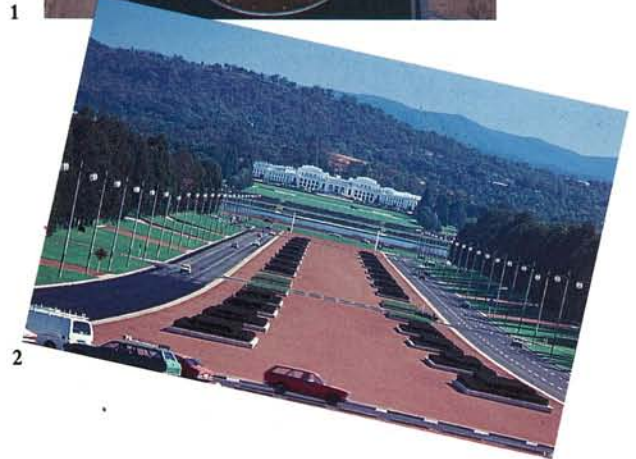
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WELDON TRANNIES

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Charles Perkins, head of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, with Aboriginal demonstrators and their supporters at new Parliament House. Photograph by J. Houldsworth.

WELDON TRANNIES



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now bound by Lake Burley Griffin, Commonwealth Avenue and Kings Avenue, with Parliament House at the apex of the triangle.

The architects

An American firm Mitchell/Giurgola won the international competition to design Parliament House. The architect responsible for the creative design was Italian-born Romaldo Giurgola. The project architect was Australian-born Richard Thorp.

The vision

Giurgola envisaged a structure on the summit of Capital Hill that would become part of the natural landscape. The hill would be dug partly away, and the new Parliament House would be built into it, rather than on top of it. In this way Giurgola hoped to respect at least some of Burley Griffin's original concept: the sovereignty of the hill would be kept. The land would remain over the heads of the parliamentarians and the flag — flying from a tall and commanding flagpole — would be the crowning symbol of national identity.

The style

Giurgola's highly original style, his emphasis on geometry, proportion and order, and his careful use of pattern, texture and colour have created a building that stands as a landmark to architectural endeavour. The style derives from Rome, the city of his birth. The building's robust strength, grand simplicity and axial geometry are reminiscent of the imperial forums and great basilicas but the interpretation is very much his own.

The cost

The design competition specified a building that would cost approximately \$151 million to build. In 1980 the Parliament House Authority calculated that the building would cost \$220 million in June 1978 prices, a figure that could only be regarded as an estimate as the authority did not have access to a detailed quantity survey. A revised estimate in November 1987 prices set the cost of the building at \$897 million.

The cost of non-building items such as furniture, communications systems and decorations was estimated to be \$82 million in 1981. The 1987 revised estimate had risen to \$159 million, making the total cost of the new Parliament House more than \$1056 million in November 1987 prices.



1 *Marble foyer at new Parliament House. Photograph by Peter Shore.*
WELDON TRANNIES

2 *Mosaicists Franco Colussi and Aldo Rossi working on the forecourt mosaic. Photograph by Philip Quirk.*



3 *New Parliament House at night. Photograph by J. Houldsworth.*
WELDON TRANNIES

9 May The Bicentennial Around Australia Relay race began from Parliament House, Canberra, with participants linking Australia by each running one kilometre.

10 May The High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns, ruled that Robert Wood, senator for the Nuclear Disarmament Party since 1987, was not, at the time of his election, an Australian citizen and therefore not qualified to stand for federal parliament. Mr Wood, aged 38, migrated from Britain at the age of thirteen.

10 May Glenda Adams won the 1987 Miles Franklin Literary Award for her novel *Dancing on coral*, published by Angus & Robertson.

12 May Despite opposition from state premiers at the Premiers' Conference in Canberra, the federal government reduced payments to the states for 1988/89 by an average of 3.7 per cent in real terms. In total, the states received more than \$24 billion, of which more than half went to New South Wales and Victoria.

13 May After a five-week committal hearing, Al Grassby, former minister for immigration in the Whitlam Labor government, was cleared of allegations that he had accepted \$40 000 from crime boss Robert Trimbole. The magistrate, Jon Williams, criticised the National Crime Authority's investigation when he handed down the decision.

13 May The Anglican Church took the first legislative steps to allow women to become priests in the Melbourne Diocese. Melbourne Archbishop Dr David Penman said that to refuse to allow women into the priesthood ran contrary to cultural trends, and he pointed out that the Head of the Anglican Church is a woman, Queen Elizabeth II.

14 May Two of the largest coal companies in NSW, Broken Hill Proprietary and Coal and Allied Industries Ltd, announced that they would close five mines in the state and retrench 1200 miners.

14 May Western Australia defeated Queens-

HISTORY

15 May 1788 'In all the country thro' which I have passed I have seldom gone a quarter of a mile without seeing trees which appear to have been destroyed by fire. We have seen very heavy thunderstorms, and I believe the gum-tree strongly attracts the lightning, but the natives always make their fire, if not before their own huts, at the root of a gum-tree, which burns very freely, and they never put a fire out when they leave the place.'

GOVERNOR PHILLIP IN A DESPATCH
TO LORD SYDNEY

land 3-1 in the final of the Esanda Australian Women's Hockey Championships in Canberra.

14-15 May Australia defeated the Rest of the World team in the World Polocrosse Test held in Ballarat, Victoria. Australia won the series 2-0 after another victory in Berrima, NSW, on 20-21 May.

15 May The Australian Broadcasting Corporation screened the first program in the television series the *Nature of Australia*, a combined ABC-BBC production that took three years to make and which has been sold to more than 60 countries.

15 May The governor of NSW, Sir James Rowland, opened a Bicentennial monument at Circular Quay, Sydney. Based on an official survey of the colony commissioned by Governor Bligh, the monument is a topographical representation of Sydney in 1808.

15 May The Qld government decided that condom vending machines would be allowed in supermarkets, cinemas, railway stations and universities but prohibited in schools and colleges of technical and further education.

16 May According to Professor Henry Reynolds of James Cook University, Qld, Australia should consider erecting memorials to Aborigines who have died defending their land in the 200 years since white settlement.

16-18 MAY

The Great Australian Art Exhibition, a comprehensive survey of Australian art, opened at the Qld Art Gallery in Brisbane on 16 May and the Bicentennial Australian Biennale made its debut at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney on 18 May.

Creating Australia, 200 years of art, 1788-1988 began in Brisbane and travelled to every state in Australia. It brought together some 300 major works, from early colonial and Aboriginal works to Imants Tillers' *Kangaroo blank* (1988), a comment on Australian identity. The exhibition drew on the resources of 69 private and public collections in Australia and England. Works were exhibited from the three periods of Australian art identified by the organisers: colonial, centenary and twentieth century. The collection included the largest colonial canvas, William Strutt's depiction of a bushfire, *Black Thursday, February 6th, 1851*, from the State Library of Vic, and a number of works that are considered to define Australian art: Tom Roberts, *The break away* (1891), Frederick McCubbin's *Lost* (1886),



Above. Willem de Kooning, *Woman*, 1950. Photograph by Stewart Davidson. JOHN FAIRFAX & SONS LTD



Left. Charles Conder, *A holiday at Mentone*, 1888, oil on canvas, 46.2 x 60.8 cm. ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Arthur Streeton's *Golden summer, Eaglemont* (1889), W.C. Piguenit's *The flood in the Darling* (1895) and Hans Heysen's study of a gum tree *Red gold* (1913). Paintings such as these reflected the essential theme of the exhibition: the endeavour of the European settlers to come to terms with a flat, harsh and arid land.

The Australian Biennale is one of the most important festivals of contemporary art and an

opportunity to show the work of Australian and overseas painters, sculptors, film makers and playwrights.

While the main exhibits of the Biennale were held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay, in Sydney, the public could see other visual and performing arts in numerous inner city art galleries and small theatres. The State Rail Authority displayed billboards by American artist Barbara Kruger at Wynyard, Town Hall and Martin Place railway stations as well as a few suburban stations.

The Biennale included works by some of Australia's greatest painters since the 1940s: Arthur Boyd, Sir Sidney Nolan, Ian Fairweather, Fred Williams, Joy Hester, Ralph Balson and Tony

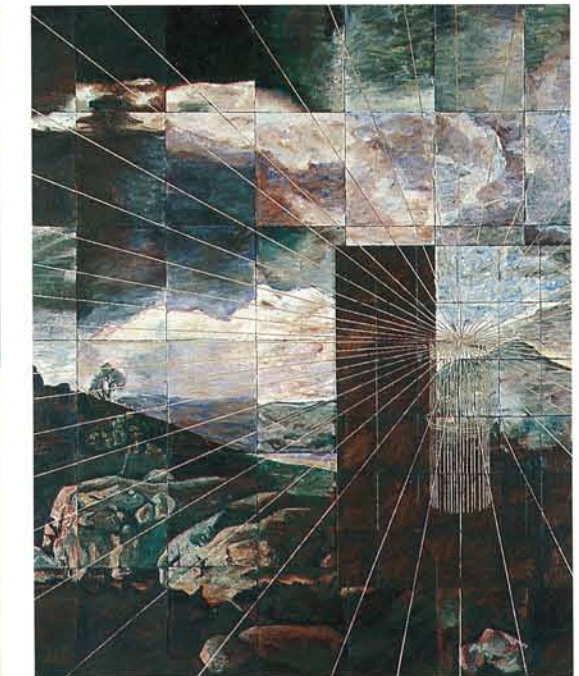
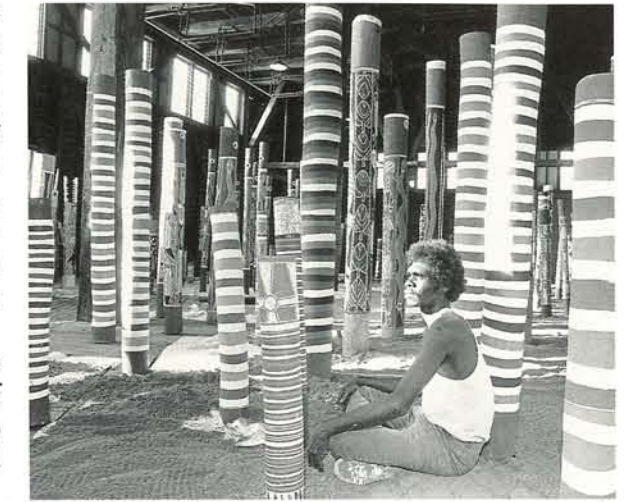
Tuckson. Works by modern masters such as Andy Warhol, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko represented the United States. French or French-adopted artists included Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque and Pierre Bonnard.

In Western tradition art is seen as individual expression. One of the aims of the 1988 Biennale was to remind Australians of the more ancient sources of artistic tradition in this country, those which have their roots in the first human occupation of the continent, and which are communal rather than individual. The full achievement of Aboriginal art — a spare, stylised language refined over thousands of years — remains unknown to many Australians. A small part of that achievement could be seen in the installation of 200 burial poles at Pier 2/3 by the Ramingining Artists Community.

The media seized upon the performances of the Austrian Hermann Nitsch, who uses the blood of slaughtered animals as his artistic medium. Video recordings of Nitsch's performances were seized by the NSW Police.

Below. Aboriginal artist John Dhurrikayu with 200 burial poles from northern Arnhem Land, NT — one for each year of white settlement. JOHN FAIRFAX & SONS LIMITED

Bottom right. Imants Tillers, *Kangaroo blank*, 1988, acrylic, gouache, oilstick, oil on 78 canvas boards, 213 x 196 cms.



Left. Roger Hilton, *Oi yoi yoi*. Photograph by Stuart Davidson. JOHN FAIRFAX & SONS LTD

17 May The Commission of Inquiry into the LEMONTHYME and Southern Forests headed by Michael Helsham, former chief judge in the Supreme Court of NSW, was tabled in federal parliament. The inquiry into the future of the LEMONTHYME and Southern forests was set up by the government in an attempt to reach a compromise between the demands of the timber industry and conservationists in southwest Tasmania. In a 2-1 decision the inquiry found that only about 10 per cent of the 283 000 hectares of eucalypt forest was worthy of World Heritage listing. The dissenting commissioner thought the entire area should be nominated. While timber industry lobbyists urged acceptance of the Helsham recommendations, the conservation movement began a national campaign to persuade the federal government to overrule the report and save the trees from loggers and woodchippers.

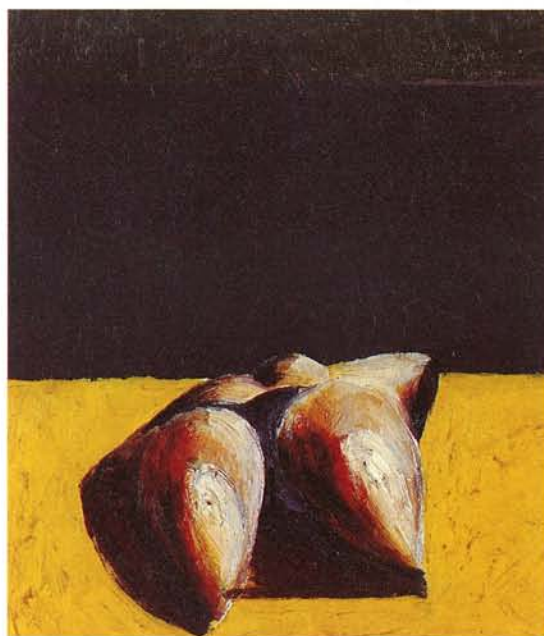
17 May The Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs presented Prime Minister Bob Hawke with a human rights award for his commitment to Soviet Jewry and his endeavours to free refuseniks.

18 May Australian Iron & Steel Pty Ltd lost an appeal against a decision by the Equal Opportunity Tribunal to award more than \$1 million to 34 women ironworkers whose employment prospects were adversely affected by rationalisation of production at the company's plant in Wollongong.

According to Justice Priestley of the NSW Court of Appeal, the decision of the tribunal, which held that the women were dismissed on a discriminatory basis because of their sex, would remain 'a considerable landmark of changing social conditions'.

19 May John Allwright succeeded Ian McLachlan as head of the National Farmers Federation. Under McLachlan the NFF achieved a high public profile as one of Australia's most formidable producer organisations.

19 May The exhibition *Angry penguins* opened at the Hayward Gallery, London, to critical acclaim. It took its title from the quarterly cultural journal published from 1940 to 1946 by the Adelaide University Arts Associ-



Back cover of the catalogue for the exhibition *Angry Penguins*, showing a detail of Albert Tucker's *Sunbathers, 1944*.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GALLERY

ation and then by Max Harris and John Reed in Melbourne. The exhibition showed works by Melbourne painters of the 1940s and other 'realists' of the period, many of whom had been associated with the *Angry penguins* magazine. They included Joy Hester, Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker and Danila Vassilieff.

20 May Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Hayden held talks with the French President Francois Mitterrand. The meeting focused on developments in the French South Pacific territory of New Caledonia following a commando raid during which 21 people were killed. Hayden indicated he was confident that President Mitterrand's government was determined to reach an acceptable political solution to the question of independent status for New Caledonia.

20 May The government accepted the findings of the 1985 Evatt Royal Commission and its view that Agent Orange did not cause cancers among Vietnam veterans or deformities in their children.

21 May Tropical cyclone Herbie wrought havoc on the central coast of WA, destroying

fruit and vegetable crops. The 30 000-tonne ship *Korean star* went aground at Cape Cuvier, spreading an oil slick that stretched 20 kilometres along the coast and 8 kilometres out to sea.

21 May Dr Phillip Law of Melbourne, who has visited Antarctica 28 times and charted more than 5000 kilometres of the frozen continent's coastline, was named Australian Geographic Society Adventurer of the Year.

22 May The director of the World Koala Research Corporation, in Queensland, Dr Steve Brown, announced that half of Australia's dwindling population of koalas — thought to number between 200 000 and 400 000 — were dying from the disease chlamydia. According to Dr Brown, 80 per cent of their natural habitat had been destroyed by human beings, and the animal would become extinct within a decade unless funds were poured into research to prevent the disease.

22 May Sir Ronald Wilson, a justice of the High Court, was installed as the president of

the Uniting Church of Australia for a three-year term. Sir Ronald did not foresee conflict between his two roles, and said that the main challenges facing the church in the following years would be in ecumenical, multicultural and Aboriginal affairs. He believed the church had to be vigilant against the racism close to the surface of Australian society.

23 May The Supreme Court of Vic made history when it awarded Klaus Rabenalt \$676 000 in damages against Midalco Pty Ltd, the owners of a Wittenoom asbestos mine. Rabenalt, who worked in the WA mine for six months in 1960, was diagnosed as having mesothelioma, a fatal cancer of the lining of the lung, in 1987. Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos. The verdict was the first in favour of a miner claiming to suffer from the effects of working in the Wittenoom mine.



Hornsby Hospital's assistant director of nursing Suzanne O'Brien with Pretty Lady at the presentation of a humidicrib to the Koala Park Sanctuary, Sydney, to aid medical research into koalas. Photograph by Anton Cermak. Sydney Morning Herald, 29 July 1988.



DUST OF DEATH

Graphic highlighting the dangers of asbestos dust.
Age 8 June 1988.

23 May A report, *Unemployment: the economic and social cost*, released by the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne claimed that unemployment cost the federal government between \$5 billion and \$6 billion in direct costs in 1987.

23 May Acting in response to a request by Father Walter Lini, head of the government of Vanuatu, Australia placed an RAAF Hercules on standby to carry Papua New Guinean forces to Vanuatu. Father Lini believed the security of his country was endangered by opposition forces, following a riot in the capital of Port Vila.

23 May The inaugural Pascall Prize was awarded to Queensland writer David Malouf in

ANZAAS

16-21 May The centenary congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science opened at the University of Sydney on 16 May.

Genetics The media came under attack for promoting the idea that genetic engineering was 'playing God' and threatened the environment. According to Dr David Danks at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, gene probes enabled experts to diagnose about 20 human genetic diseases in babies before they were born. Dr Margaret Brumby of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research, Melbourne, argued that interference with the course of human evolution was nothing new: medical science had long saved the lives of people who would have died of genetic diseases, thus ensuring that defective genes would not be passed on to new generations, but cautioned that issues arising out of genetic research, while not unique to this field, should not be ignored. She stated 'It is not enough to say "we can, therefore we should".'

Dr Jim Peacock, chief of the CSIRO division of plant industry, claimed that the 'objectives of genetic engineering will enhance the quality of the environment rather than add potential hazard.' And, he revealed a major discovery by CSIRO scientists, a mechanism known as 'gene shears' that involves the addition of a gene, but in this case the added gene is a pair of 'shears' or 'scissors', which stops the working of another gene already in a plant. If a gene is making an undesirable product, it can now be 'turned off'. In food industries that rely on fermentation, it may now be possible to protect bacterial cultures from destructive cultures.

AIDS Justice Michael Kirby, President of the NSW Court of Appeal, foreshadowed that excessive litigation in the US may delay or prevent the development of useful drugs against AIDS. Like cancer, AIDS would probably be best controlled by a combination of powerful drugs, many of which may have serious side effects. These side effects, however, rendered manufacturers and distributors liable to litigation. The consequence was that vaccine and other drug manufacturers in the US had been described as a 'dying breed'. The solution might lie in a federal compensation system for those individuals who suffered from debilitating drug reactions.

Cancer The incidence of the most common cancers in women could be substantially reduced with an effective screening program, according to Dr Heather Mitchell of the Vic Cytology (Gynaecological) Service. Currently, only one in three Australian women at risk from cervical cancer are screened. As a result, '340 women are still dying from cervical cancer each year'. Professor John Forbes, from the University of Newcastle, believes that comprehensive mammography X-ray screening would result in a potential reduction of 500 deaths per year from breast cancer. Such screening could detect growths well before they could be felt.

Astronomy Dr Stuart Ross Taylor, from the Australian National University, produced new evidence about the origins of the moon. According to Dr Taylor, the moon was formed when a wandering planetary object about the size of Mars struck Earth approximately 4.4 billion years ago, tearing off a disc of hot material that eventually solidified into the moon. Most of the material that makes up the moon comes not from Earth but from the object that struck Earth.

Meteorology Australia's weather apparently follows the dictates of the El Nino-Southern Oscillation. While Australia suffered drought, the normally dry west coast of South America was deluged by rain. The passing of El Nino is said to bring heavy rain to the east coast of Australia, of the kind that 'fell in Sydney and Brisbane in the first half of 1988'.

Sydney. The \$25 000 award, to be presented biennially, is Australia's richest single literary prize. Named in memory of journalist Geraldine Pascall, the prize is awarded to an Australian writer who has developed 'an outstanding and original voice'. Malouf's books include *Johnno* (1975), *An imaginary life* (1978), *Antipodes* (1985) and *Blood relations* (1988).

24 May Russell Hinze resigned after serving 22 years in the Queensland parliament and fourteen as a minister. His last portfolio was minister for local government, main roads and racing in the National Party government of Mike Ahern.

24 May Qantas announced a record annual profit of \$131 million, an increase of 47 per cent from the previous year. Revenue increased to more than \$3 billion and the airline carried 3 453 749 passengers, a rise of 14.3 per cent.

25 May In the May Economic Statement, which predicted a record government surplus of more than \$3 billion, Treasurer Paul Keating cut the company tax rate from 49 cents to 39 cents in the dollar; reduced tariffs by approximately 20 per cent; imposed new taxes on superannuation; and abolished the controversial and widely ignored \$5 immigration clearance fee. The government forecast economic growth over the next year of 3.5 per cent and a drop in the inflation rate to 5 per cent, with unemployment remaining steady. The economic statement was seen by many as carefully designed to make income tax cuts possible before the next federal election. According to Keating, the \$3 billion surplus would enable Australia to pay off some of its enormous debt.

25 May In the May Economic Statement Treasurer Paul Keating announced the establishment of the Australian Film Finance Corporation to be financed by recurrent federal funding matched by increasing levels of private investment. The corporation was set up on 12 July in response to a plea from representatives of the Australian film industry on 14 February to replace the tax incentive scheme with a 'film bank', which would make loans to television and film producers. At the same time, the taxation benefit to investors was cut from 120 per cent to 100 per cent.

25 May The ABC announced plans to reduce the number of staff by 957 during the following five years, representing a saving of \$100 million. In all, 15 per cent of the workforce would be lost. Transport and Communications Minister Senator Gareth Evans guaranteed the ABC funding of \$430 million a year, indexed for inflation until 1991.

27 May The NSW Supreme Court sentenced millionaire Andrew Kalajzich to life imprisonment for arranging a contract to murder his wife Megan while she was sleeping in their family home in the Sydney suburb of Fairlight.

28 May The exhibition *Edge to edge: Australian contemporary art in Japan* opened at the National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan. It showed in depth the works of twelve Australian artists including Mike Parr, Imants Tillers, John Nixon, Julie Brown-Rrap, Lindy Lee, Bill Henson, Richard Dunn, Jacky Redgate, Peter Booth, Ken Unsworth, Peter Tyndall and Jenny Watson. The exhibition toured to Nagoya, Tokyo and Sapporo.

28 May The Australian Olympic Federation ratified a 358-member Olympic team to compete in the Seoul Olympics in September. The team consisted of 268 athletes, 37 coaches, 26 sports managers, 15 medical staff and 12 administrators. It is the largest team to represent Australia overseas.

29 May Archaeologists announced major discoveries in southwest Tas, the area under consideration for World Heritage listing. The discovery included twenty caves which contained major prehistoric remains. At Nanwoon Cave on the Florentine River, for example, researchers found bone from a human skull that was dated to 12 000 years old, the oldest known in Tasmania.

29 May Australia won the first rugby union test against Great Britain 22-16 at Ballymore Oval, Brisbane.

30 May The inquest into the deaths of teenage jackeroos James Annetts and Simon Amos resumed in Kununurra, Western Australia. Coroner David McCann adjourned the inquest to 3 June.

THE SYDNEY HARBOUR TUNNEL

30 May In 1896 the *Sydney Mail* published a full-page article on a proposal for a rail tunnel from King Street to Milsons Point, where the north shore rail line terminated, and a separate tunnel from Circular Quay to Milsons Point for vehicles and pedestrians. Under successive Liberal and Labor state governments, this proposal and others like it were allowed to lapse. During the 1964 NSW state election campaign, the opposition leader, Robin Askin, revived the issue of a second harbour crossing, promising that a Liberal government would begin construction of a tunnel. Thirteen years later, the Wran Labor government called for submissions on a second harbour crossing. In 1987, with the vigorous support of the Minister for Public Works, Roads and Ports Laurie Brereton, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel (Private Joint Venture) Act was passed.

The harbour tunnel proposal provoked enormous public debate, with more than 80 per cent of the 433 submissions received being opposed to the project. Critics, such as the Save Our Sydney (SOS) Foundation, described the project as foolhardy, and claimed that it would encourage more motorists to use the already traffic-laden arterial roads in the northern suburbs. Supporters, such as the NRMA, praised it as an efficient city bypass causing minimal environmental impact.

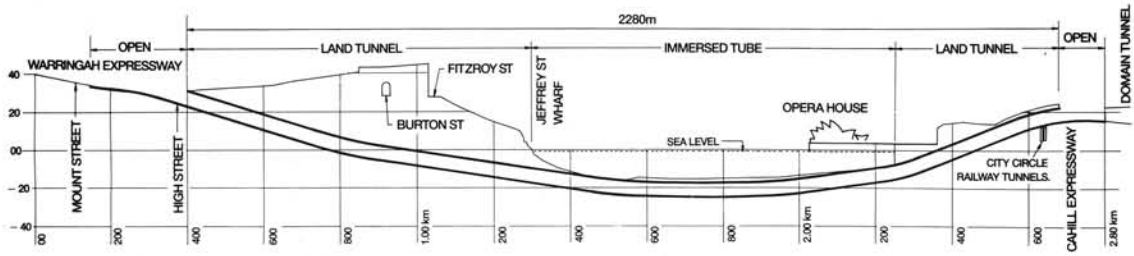
One of the most vocal opponents of the tunnel was Ted Mack, mayor of North Sydney, the municipality most affected by the tunnel. His criticisms centred on the government's relationship with the contractors, Kumagai Gumi, who were responsible for the underwater tunnel in Hong Kong and the Australian construction firm Transfield. Commenting on the Environmental Impact Statement, produced for the joint venturers by consultants Cameron McNamara Pty Ltd in November 1986, Mack said that the tunnel project had virtually no public benefit [but that]

its private benefit is to provide Kumagai [sic] Transfield with a \$657 million contract, a figure which they have nominated, without any competition and a guaranteed income over the next thirty years of approximately \$11 000 million, paid for by Sydney motorists. Kumagai [sic] Transfield have an equity in the project of only \$7 million.

The Environmental Impact Statement placed a different emphasis on the financial implications of the tunnel: it would be financed by a \$1 harbour bridge toll with no direct costs to the state government. It concluded that the tunnel would have minimal environmental impact.

The Department of Environment and Planning produced a report entitled *Proposed Sydney harbour tunnel. Environmental impact assessment*, which agreed with the plan to raise the Harbour Bridge toll, but argued that it should subsidise suburban road building, not a harbour tunnel. The 80-page report, circulated to government ministers in March 1987, contained strong objections to the proposed tunnel. It stressed that a tunnel would increase traffic congestion in the city and that the major bottleneck would be on the feeder roads, not on the bridge.

The report also listed alternative proposals, including the clip-on, an extra traffic lane and footway on the eastern side of the bridge. The government rejected the alternatives and accepted the recommendations of the commissioner for main roads, Bernard Fisk. In his *Sydney harbour tunnel. Report on environmental impact assessment* dated 6 April 1987, Fisk approved the 'design, construction and operation of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel' subject to certain modifications and conditions. The bridge toll was lifted from 20 cents to \$1 for all vehicles from midnight on 31 May 1987. Preliminary work began on the tunnel the following day.



THE SYDNEY HARBOUR



T U N N E L



This anti-tunnel advertisement focused its attack on the NSW minister for public works, Laurie Brereton, whose name appeared on the department's billboards. Photograph by Jenny Mills.

WELDON TRANNIES

IMMIGRATION

During 1988 there was no significant change in the pattern of immigration developed over previous years. Yet 1988 saw the abandoning of bipartisan support for multiculturalism and for a universal selection process. 'Multiculturalism' denoted the official recognition that Australians came from a wide variety of backgrounds that should be acknowledged in welfare, educational and media policy. 'Universal selection' meant that ethnic, racial, religious or national origins would not determine intake, which would be based on criteria universally applied to all applicants. The Liberal party, which had fought the 1987 general election on a platform of full support for multiculturalism, drew closer to its National Party ally, leaving Labor to defend existing policy. The FitzGerald report on immigration (*Immigration: a commitment to Australia: the report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies*) was released in June and was widely quoted in the ensuing arguments which made immigration a highly contentious issue until the end of the year.



Nino Randazzo, editor of *Il Globo*, the Italian community newspaper, which ran the headline 'Rapporto FitzGerald: un insulto agli immigrati in Australia' (*The FitzGerald report: an insult to all migrants in Australia*). *Il Globo*, based in Melbourne, has the largest circulation of any foreign language newspaper in Australia. Photograph by Tony Feder, Good Weekend, 2 July 1988.

Bipartisanship had characterised immigration and settlement policy since 1947, when the mass immigration programs were begun by the Chifley government. These programs were continued under Menzies and by the mid-1960s were based on massive intakes of immigrants from Southern Europe. Between 1966 and 1973 both major political parties relaxed their support for the White Australia policy, ending in

Whitlam's dramatic termination of any policy based on racial characteristics. In 1975 the Fraser Liberal government introduced refugee migration from Indochina, something Whitlam had been reluctant to do. Fraser continued and expanded the multicultural approach first launched by Whitlam and Al Grassby in 1973. There were differences of emphasis and timing, but the two major parties were rarely out of step in this series of departures from the past consensus. Even dedicated previous supporters of White Australia, such as the Returned Services' League or the Australian Workers' Union, had by the 1970s changed their official views to accept a universal immigrant intake.

The change of party attitudes in 1988 must be seen as a response to a number of developing concerns rather than to any immediate crisis. There were no visible tensions between Australian-born and immigrants, and certainly none comparable to those between Aborigines and white Australians. In some areas, most notably northern New South Wales and northern Western Australia, there were riots involving Aborigines, while the continuing issues of 'black deaths in custody' and the 'celebration' of British colonisation in 1788 were much more bitterly contested than ethnic relations between any other sections of the population. There was no sudden influx of new arrivals, although the actual number of immigrants was in excess of the original number planned for by the Department of Immigration. No refugee crisis arose other than the long-term problems that had influenced Australian policy for more than ten years. The number of immigrants from Indochina was fewer than in previous years, while the English-speaking component, mainly from Britain, New Zealand, North America and South Africa, remained large. The number of immigrants from Europe remained low, with only Yugoslavia maintaining a high level of interest. These patterns were essentially the same as for previous years. There was, however, an increase in foreign tourism as a result of the Bicentenary and Expo and a growing movement (especially in Queensland) against Japanese and Overseas Chinese investment in Australian property.

The results of the 1986 Census were broadly available by the beginning of 1988, although it is unlikely that they had much effect on the debates. These showed that there were considerable numbers of 'Asians' in Australia, but that they came from a variety of countries.

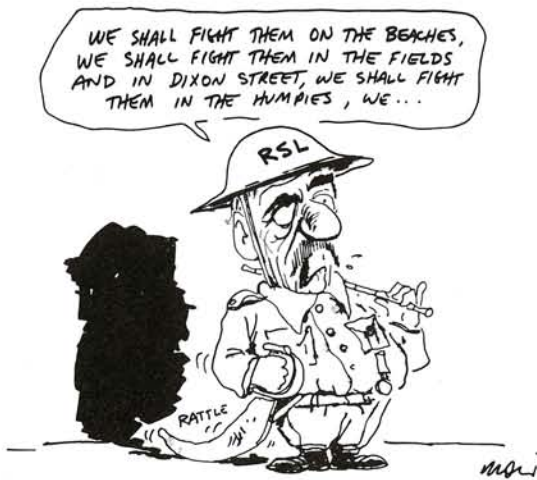
Many, including the great majority of Indians and Sri Lankans, used only English in the home and were Christians. The most rapidly growing numbers, from the Philippines, were also overwhelmingly Christians and most were bilingual in English and a Filipino language. The debate during 1988 was confused as to whether critics of official policy were objecting to the race, the religion, the ethnic or the national origins of so-called 'Asians'. Those most distinct from the Australian majority, and presumably arousing most hostility, were neither of Christian or English-speaking background nor of similar physical appearance. As the FitzGerald report noted, official statistics do not agree on a definition of Asia — with the Australian Bureau of Statistics including, and the Immigration Department excluding, the Middle East. As many critics of multiculturalism have drawn attention to Muslim practices and attitudes (either directly or by implication) it is reasonable to suppose that there is some hostility towards immigration from those Middle Eastern societies (such as Turkey and Lebanon) where most of Australia's 109 523 Muslims come from.

The various markedly different groups living in Australia were not particularly large. No figures for 'race' have been published in Australia for more than twenty years, other than for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. As many born in Asia are of European descent, birthplace is not a useful indicator of groups likely to arouse racial prejudice. The best indicators include language used at home and religion practised. The Census showed that the largest numbers of people using a non-European language at home were 119 187 (0.8 per cent) for Arabic; 139 100 (0.9 per cent) for various Chinese languages; 25 476 (0.2 per cent) for Filipino languages, 34 140 (0.2 per cent) for Turkish and 65 856 (0.4 per cent) for Vietnamese. This compares with 40 790 (0.3 per cent) using Aboriginal languages at home. All those using a non-European language at home taken together numbered 568 874 (3.6 per cent of the total Australian population), or a slightly higher figure if those under four years of age are taken into account. 'Non-European' religions were less strongly represented, with only 247 106 Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and 'Other non-Christians', or 2.1 per cent of those recording any religion. If the debate was about culture and not about race (in the sense of physical appearance) then these are the relevant

dimensions. In the twenty months after the Census (to March 1988) the largest number of settlers arriving from Asia and the Middle East were from the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Lebanon, China and Sri Lanka. The only other major 'non-European' group came from Fiji. As in the past the two largest groups came from the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The number of settlers from English-speaking countries in this post-Census period totalled 37.3 per cent of all arrivals, compared with 41.2 per cent from Asia and the Middle East.

As there are no official estimates of the strength of 'non-European races' in Australia, these Census figures will have to suffice as indicating a probable 'non-European' element of 3 to 4 per cent of the population, together with less than 2 per cent of Aboriginal or Islander descent, still low by comparison with such English-speaking societies as the United States or New Zealand and no larger than for Canada or the United Kingdom. It is interesting to note that Opposition Leader John Howard's speech at Esperance, WA, on 30 July did not mention Asian immigration at all, but focused its call for 'One Australia' on the dangers of multiculturalism, Aboriginal separatism and trade union privileges. All these issues have been canvassed in conservative politics for some years. There is opinion polling evidence that they strike a responsive note in the majority of voters. Indeed, it seems likely that many see 'multiculturalism' as synonymous with 'multiracialism' — the deliberate encouragement of what used to be called 'race mixture' or even 'mongrelisation' in the more robust days of White Australia. Many saw Howard's critique of current policy as a 'coded' message that he favoured a major reduction in the intake from Asia.

Howard, in media interviews in early August, denied that he wanted a return to White Australia, but also believed that 'the pace of change brought about by the migrant intake is an issue that any government has got to keep in mind.' The more conservative elements in the debate, such as the National Party or the Returned Services' League, were less ambiguous about the change in approach than the Liberal party, which had been deeply committed to multiculturalism and to a non-discriminatory intake as recently as the federal election of 11 July 1987.



At his inauguration on 6 September, the new president of the RSL, Brigadier Garland, attacked multiculturalism, saying 'We want to retain what is our predominant characteristic — European.' Cartoon by Moir, Sydney Morning Herald, 9 September 1988.

The report *Immigration, a commitment to Australia*, prepared by the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies, chaired by Dr Stephen FitzGerald, was tabled by the minister for immigration, Clyde Holding, on 3 June. Previously there had been concern about the committee's views on multiculturalism and this was sustained by the report and by an interview that FitzGerald gave to the *Australian* newspaper after the report was tabled in parliament. Ethnic organisations and the Office for Multicultural Affairs had already raised these concerns, which centred around the proposition that the immigration program was being damaged by public hostility to poorly understood official policy on multiculturalism. The minister promised that three months had been set aside for public evaluation and comment. The discussion period extended to six months during which time the Leader of the Opposition broke the consensus on multiculturalism and hinted at a departure from a non-discriminatory intake. While the FitzGerald report gave no attention to the problem of Asian immigration, much of the public debate did. The general finding of the report was that immigration had lost direction because there were increasing numbers interested in migrating to Australia but inadequate procedures for selecting those who would be of most economic benefit to Australia. It was argued that for each person admitted there were ten enquiries (although this is not the same as saying that there were ten com-

pleted applications). Family reunion, especially for newly arrived Asians, tends to bring in less skilled immigrants than if a strict measure of qualification were applied. It was, rather optimistically, argued that Australian involvement in the refugee program could be controlled and reduced, especially from Indochina. It was also hoped that the number of business and skilled applications would remain steady and, by implication that Australia could continue to compete for skilled applicants with the United States and Canada. There was no suggestion that racial, cultural or regional preferences would be applied. Currently most of the business migrants are coming from Asia and especially from Hong Kong and the Overseas Chinese communities of South East Asia.

The report reflected the views of the business sector and of the commonwealth bureaucracy rather than of the ethnic communities. Indeed, one of its basic arguments was that immigration policy had become 'client directed', implying that too much attention was being paid to the 'ethnic lobby'. This approach proved to be politically rather naive, as that lobby is influential on the ALP and was most anxious both to defend family reunion and multiculturalism. The committee's emphasis on skills, and particularly on English proficiency, alarmed those representing the less-skilled non-English-speaking immigrants who have traditionally supported the ALP. The Federal ALP Caucus Committee on Immigration took an important role in influencing the debate within the parliamentary Labor party. The report, although tabled by Clyde Holding, was guided through by Senator Robert Ray, a Victorian well aware of the close links between ethnic communities and the party in his own state.

The report recommended that, in order to redirect immigration towards more skilled applicants, a new system of points allocation was required. The further development of this system was delegated to the National Population Council, an advisory body to the Minister for Immigration. It was announced in December that intake criteria from 1 July 1989 were largely to be based on the NPC system. FitzGerald proposed only three categories of immigrants: family reunion, refugee and general. These were to include 40 000, 15 000 and 95 000 annual arrivals respectively.

The inclusion within the general category of some who would otherwise have been admitted under family reunion (such as parents under

55), was strongly resisted by the ethnic communities and by the ALP Caucus Committee. There was also some resistance from organisations assisting refugees, to the limitation of the refugee intake and especially to the proposition that Australia should disengage itself from Indochinese commitments. Admissions under the 'general' category were expected to be determined mainly by economic and employability factors. New Zealand immigrants were excluded from all these proposals as movement across the Tasman is not controlled in the same way. What was being sought under the proposed general category was essentially young, skilled, well educated and English-speaking immigrants to add to those already arriving in increasing numbers from New Zealand.

It quickly became clear that some of the FitzGerald report's most contentious recommendations would not be implemented. These centred around citizenship, which FitzGerald had been surprised to learn had not been taken up by more than one million overseas-born residents. A rather punitive approach was suggested, including the limitation of social service eligibility and of the right to nominate relatives under the family reunion scheme. However, nearly two-thirds of all non-citizens are from Britain and the Commonwealth and had effectively been enfranchised voters if they had arrived before 1984, when eligibility as voters was withdrawn from newly arriving British subjects. It was politically naive to imagine that they could be deprived of benefits to which they had been entitled, often for many years. In contrast to this, Asians in general, and refugees in particular, tend to naturalise as quickly as possible after arrival. While the Hawke government agreed to a campaign favouring naturalisation, it rejected proposals for a punitive approach reminiscent of the 1950s. The government also reasserted its support for multiculturalism, doing so with even greater enthusiasm once John Howard had criticised the concept at the end of July.

In a ministerial statement on 8 December, Senator Ray strongly supported multiculturalism, universality and family reunion. He recommended the creation of a Bureau of Immigration Research. Intake levels would remain at 140 000 per annum in three major categories: family (71 000), economic (54 000), and humanitarian (14 000), with an emergency residue of 1000. Greater emphasis would be placed on recognising overseas qualifications but he did

not accept the need for a completely new Migration Act.

The report was highly critical of the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs. It felt that a more professional service was needed and that the absence of a sustained research effort was particularly regrettable. Senator Ray endorsed FitzGerald's criticism of the lack of policy-orientated research. The department has been through a rapid succession of ministers — three being responsible for the setting up, tabling and consideration of the report over a period of only eighteen months. FitzGerald hoped to end the confusion over policy which such rapid changes had brought and to counter objections to mass immigration in general and to Asian immigration in particular. It was his concern that opposition to multiculturalism was damaging the acceptability of the immigration program. The central philosophy of the report emphasised commitment to Australia, the need to take up citizenship, the selling of immigration to a sceptical public and the argument that immigration was both good for Australia and unthreatening to its way of life. But the revival of a very political and public debate about Asian immigration during 1988 was not very helpful in achieving these aspirations.

The public debate about immigration and multiculturalism reached its climax during August, although continuing to rumble around in discussions and the media until early December when cabinet responded to the FitzGerald report. Demonstrations by Macedonians and Croatians in the last week of November sparked off a new debate about the propriety of bringing overseas political issues into Australian life, which many commentators blamed on multiculturalism. Macedonians had a long dispute with the Greeks about their national identity. Agitation centred around the Greek government's official bicentennial gift of an exhibition from the Macedonia of Alexander the Great and the associated visit of the Greek president. Croations demonstrating outside the Yugoslav consulate in Sydney on Yugoslav National Day were met with shots that wounded a young demonstrator and led to the closing of the consulate. The debate about Asian immigration subsided quite quickly when it became clear that negative reactions in Asia were damaging the business migration program and might affect overseas investment and tourism. In general, the media took a strong stand

against any return to White Australia but was much more ambivalent about multiculturalism. Only in the National Party and the Returned Services' League were views publicly expressed that might legitimately be termed 'racist' in wishing to end or severely limit Asian immigration regardless of the social characteristics of the immigrants. While public attitudes, as measured by opinion polls, were fairly simplistic, the principal protagonists in the debate were more sophisticated than in the past and were anxious not to give voice to crude racial stereotypes.

Following his claim at Esperance that multiculturalism had gone off the rails, John Howard declared on 31 July that immigration would be a major issue at the next election. On the same



Prime Minister Bob Hawke enjoys the 'Salute Australia' multicultural festival for the Bicentenary at the West End Market, Sunshine, Vic. Photograph by Neil Newitt, Age, 25 April 1988.



Opposition leader John Howard outlining his 'One Australia' policy in Canberra on 1 December. Australian, 2 December 1988.

weekend the National Party Federal Council voted for a decrease in Asian immigration, although at the same time Howard was saying that he would never go back to a White Australia Policy. This difference in emphasis was compounded by Senator John Stone in early September when he refused to retract earlier statements that Asian immigration would be slowed down under a Liberal-National government. Howard removed Stone from the coalition front bench in the Senate, in a move that marked his strong desire to deflect the debate away from any obsession with race. The Returned Services' League annual conference was even less subtle than the National Party and its new president, Brigadier Garland, attacked multiculturalism at his inauguration on 6 September as likely to cause instability and destruc-

tion of the fabric of the nation. The conference also called for policies that would maintain European predominance.

While Prime Minister Bob Hawke and his party took a strong stand in favour of multiculturalism and a non-discriminatory immigration policy, the Liberal party was much less united. Liberals as influential as Malcolm Fraser, Ian Macphree, Nick Greiner and Jeff Kennett all made it clear that they were not following Howard on the 'One Australia' policy which he had outlined at Esperance. Although the Liberal spokesman on immigration, Alan Cadman, attacked the paper launched by the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs on 17 September, the prime minister took the same occasion to call for a return to bipartisanship. Liberal policy was defined in such a way as to limit changes in immigration to those thought desirable by a future government to preserve social cohesion. Divisions within the Liberal party and with the Nationals, the crudity of the arguments at the RSL conference, the complaints of business migration consultants about declining Asian interest, the suspicion that some previously Liberal ethnic groups had been driven towards Labor and the general mobilisation of previously dormant supporters of multiculturalism, all helped to influence the debate. Opinion polls suggested that there was much concern with the changing ethnic character of Australia and with the whole concept of mass immigration from anywhere. Even though the debate continued to feature prominently in the media, by December politicians were anxious to move on to other matters.

JAMES JUPP

