

# LIVERPOOL MIGRATION HERITAGE TRAIL

CASULA  
POWERHOUSE  
CHANGE  
YOUR MIND

A 2008 CASULA POWERHOUSE,  
HERITAGE BRANCH IN THE NSW  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
AND NSW MIGRATION HERITAGE  
CENTRE PROJECT.

Image: © 2008 Google

## FOREWORD

Mayor of Liverpool

Liverpool prides itself on being a cosmopolitan, vibrant and harmonious community. Since the early days of settlement, Liverpool's population has been comprised of a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

To this day, Liverpool retains its diversity and has one of the highest number of overseas born people in Australia, with more than 46 per cent of people speaking a language other than English.

The Liverpool Migration Heritage Trail is part of a fantastic project showcasing and celebrating our rich cultural heritage. The trail, with panels permanently installed in 11 locations across the Liverpool Local Government Area, takes you on an exciting historical journey through our local area.

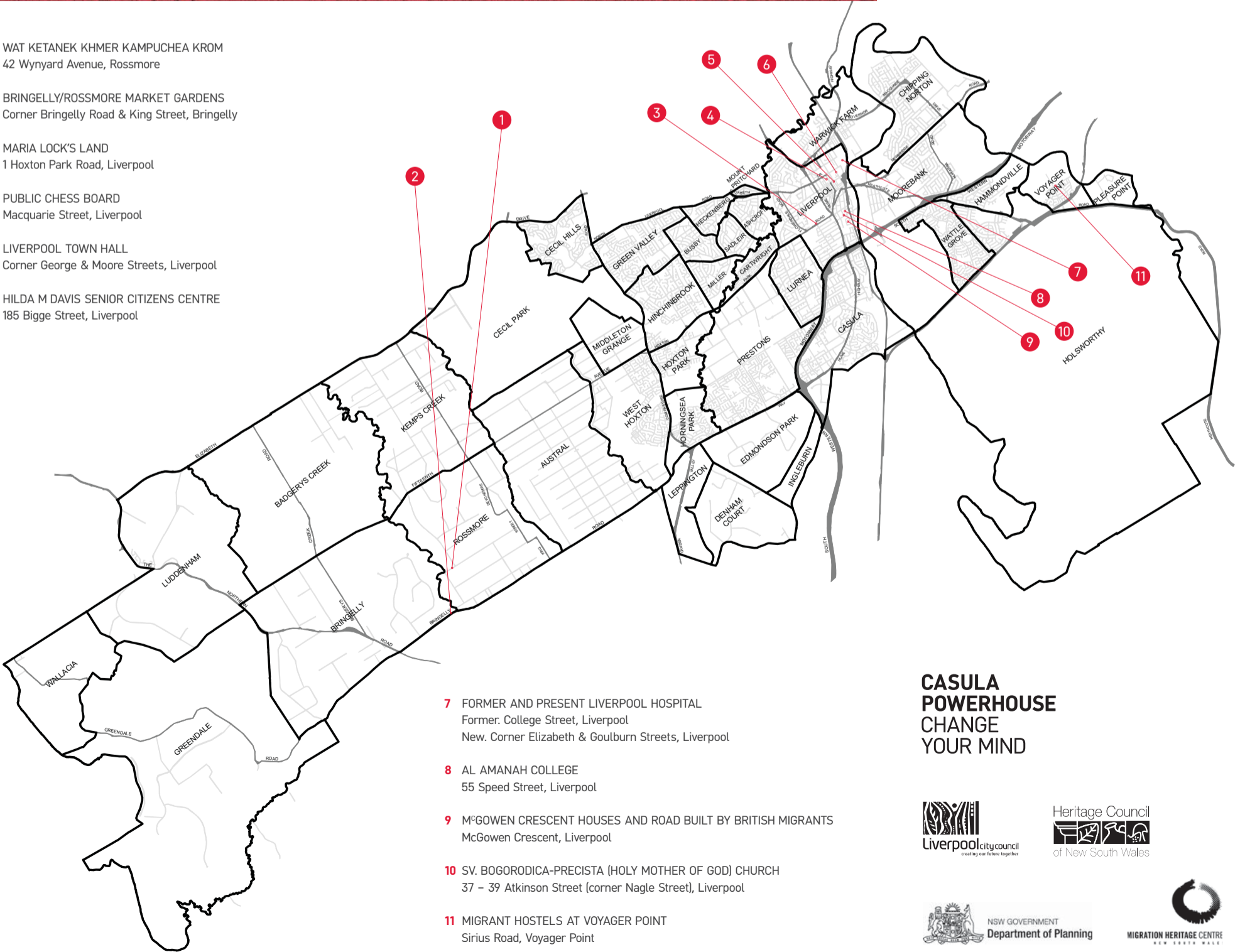
It traces our early history from Maria Lock, a member of the Darug people, through to our more recent history such as the public chess board in the heart of Liverpool City and the Buddhist temple in Rossmore.

The first of its kind in South West Sydney, the trail also recognises and celebrates the contributions that migrants have made towards the development and growth of our city.

Experience the journey for yourself and discover Liverpool's cultural heritage today.

Wendy Waller

Mayor, Liverpool City Council



- 1 WAT KETANEK KHMER KAMPUCHEA KROM  
42 Wynyard Avenue, Rossmore
- 2 BRINGELLY/ROSSMORE MARKET GARDENS  
Corner Bringelly Road & King Street, Bringelly
- 3 MARIA LOCK'S LAND  
1 Hoxton Park Road, Liverpool
- 4 PUBLIC CHESS BOARD  
Macquarie Street, Liverpool
- 5 LIVERPOOL TOWN HALL  
Corner George & Moore Streets, Liverpool
- 6 HILDA M DAVIS SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE  
185 Bigge Street, Liverpool

- 7 FORMER AND PRESENT LIVERPOOL HOSPITAL  
Former: College Street, Liverpool  
New: Corner Elizabeth & Goulburn Streets, Liverpool
- 8 AL AMANAH COLLEGE  
55 Speed Street, Liverpool
- 9 M<sup>C</sup>GOWEN CRESCENT HOUSES AND ROAD BUILT BY BRITISH MIGRANTS  
McGowen Crescent, Liverpool
- 10 SV. BOGORODICA-PRECISTA (HOLY MOTHER OF GOD) CHURCH  
37 - 39 Atkinson Street (corner Nagle Street), Liverpool
- 11 MIGRANT HOSTELS AT VOYAGER POINT  
Sirius Road, Voyager Point

CASULA  
POWERHOUSE  
CHANGE  
YOUR MIND



1

## WAT KETANEK KHMER KAMPUCHEA KROM

(Buddhist temple) Established: 1998

This temple is isolated from urban life as a place of retreat. The setting, amongst gum forest, exotic flowering plants, the creek and footbridge, offers tranquility and inspiration. Not only a place to understand and pay respect to the teaching of the Buddha, the temple is also a community meeting place.

A group of Kampuchean, who arrived in Australia during the 1980s and 1990s, purchased this site in 1998. This group comes from a Khmer region in South Vietnam, which is still linguistically and culturally distinct, despite being annexed by Vietnam over two hundred years ago.

A three tonne golden Buddha sits under the shelter of a pagoda. Cast in Bangkok (Thailand), it was imported by the community in 1999. There is a prayer hall here too, but there are plans to build a new hall with traditional Kampuchean roof and ornamentation. Monks live in the cottage nearby.

There are eight thousand or more Buddhists in the Liverpool area. Not only Kampuchean but people from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Laos, Thailand, Burma and India, who follow the Theravada Buddhist tradition, all visit the temple. However, the temple attracts and welcomes other followers of the teachings of Buddha and anyone who is interested to visit, regardless of their background.

When the temple was first proposed some local people feared it would be noisy, but now it is accepted by the community and local people visit and join in the activities here.



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## FORMER AND PRESENT LIVERPOOL HOSPITAL

Former Liverpool hospital established: 1830 Present Liverpool hospital established: 1958, refurbished in 1994

Liverpool's first hospital, in the 1790s, is thought to have operated in a tent beside the river. This Georgian brick and stone hospital opened in 1830. It was designed by convict, Francis Greenway and built by convict migrant labour. By the 1870s many aged convicts, who had been sent to New South Wales more than thirty years earlier ended their days here (transportation had ceased in 1840). In 1958 the new hospital opened in Elizabeth Street. Today the former hospital is a central feature of Liverpool as the local Technical and Further Education College (TAFE), which offers opportunities for all residents.

When the present hospital was under construction in 1994, 0.2 percent of the budget was allocated to artworks. Liverpool Hospital Redevelopment Arts Program commissioned a variety of art to reflect the cultural diversity of the local community and chose many young and migrant artists. Staff and service groups in the hospital and the local community were consulted.

Murals, mosaics, ceramics, photography and painting have all been displayed here. The use of the corridors as a gallery exposes up to a thousand people each day, to the work of many artists. Displays are rotated every few weeks. There are also some permanent works. The most recent, completed in 2007, is *The Quiet Dreaming Place* a courtyard decorated with mosaic murals. It was created by the local Aboriginal community as somewhere for comfort and solitude.



2

## BRINGELLY/ROSSMORE MARKET GARDENS

Established: c. 1890

From the earliest years of the colony, convict migrants worked in Liverpool to provide Sydney's food. During the 1890s many large estates were divided and several Italian families already living in Liverpool as well as other migrants, such as the Chinese, took over these small blocks of land and grew fruit and vegetables. Profits were marginal and often small acreages, like those at Hoxton Park, were managed by women, while their men worked in the city.

The location of market gardens in Liverpool has changed over the years. They moved west as rural land, in places like Casula and Green Valley, was claimed for housing during the 1960s and 1970s. Today Bringelly, Rossmore and Austral still support market gardeners who grow a wide variety of fresh vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers to supply Sydney's markets and multicultural cuisine. These areas, and Edmondson Park, will soon be developed as part of the expansion of the South West Sydney region. Within thirty years, it is expected that there will be an additional 46, 000 homes for about 130, 000 people in this region.

Market gardens have passed into the hands of people from many different countries: from Croatia in 1955, Germany in 1966, Malta and Lebanon in 1976, Vietnam in 1988 and China and Italy over many years. These nationalities and dates of arrival indicate some of the waves of migration to Australia from around the world.

Horticulture is a skill many migrants bring from their homeland. It does not require language skills and provides employment for many who cannot, or have not yet learned English. Work on the land often involves the whole family. The range of produce grown is a tribute to migrant innovation and adaptability.



3

## MARIA LOCK'S LAND

Land granted: 1833

It seems ironic that the land here was granted to one of the Darug people, local residents for so many generations, but displaced by the European immigrants who arrived in 1788. For thousands of years the Darug people lived on the western side of the Georges River. They were named after the wild yams they planted and harvested on the local river banks. They found food in the river and adjacent swamps, as well as hunting, and gathering seeds, shoots, roots and berries. They used trees and plants to provide tools, medicine, canoes and all other needs.

Maria Lock, a member of the Darug people, was an outstanding pupil at the Native Institution in Parramatta, where she stayed between 1814 and 1819. Her first husband, Bennelong's son, died in 1823. The following year she married Richard Lock, a convict carpenter. This was unusual as it was the first officially recognised union between an Aboriginal woman and a convict. However it was not unusual for Richard Lock as a convict to be assigned to his wife, Maria, to work on her land.

In 1831, Maria was granted land adjacent to Reverend Richard Cartwright, who resented her claim. So in 1833 she was given a forty acre block of land here at Liverpool. She also claimed her brother, Colbee's thirty acres at Blacktown and moved to live there with her family of nine children. Maria's land was shared amongst her descendants but in 1920 was claimed by the Aborigines Protection Board. Many Indigenous families today can trace their descent from Maria Lock and their connections with Durug land.



4

## PUBLIC CHESS BOARD

Established: 1994

Chess is an international game, it crosses borders. It needs no language, only the desire to play.

Chess is thought to have originated in India in about 600 AD and spread via Persia to the Mediterranean region and Europe. Although people from different countries played each other informally for centuries, the first international chess tournament was held in 1851 at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London. Howard Staunton, who promoted the chess set design that is most used today, started the competition. Karl Ernst Adolf Anderssen of Germany won and was recognised as the first world-champion chess player.

This place for playing chess was created by Liverpool City Council in 1994, when Macquarie Street was closed to traffic.

It was instantly popular and people queued to play, so small tables with chess boards were soon installed.

The final of the first chess competition, which more than fifty people entered, was held here on 26 January 1995.

Men from many different countries, especially Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South America, often gather here to watch or play. Several migrants mention the pleasure they get from playing chess at this public venue. It brings them into contact with others without any constraints or limitations of language.



5

## LIVERPOOL TOWN HALL

Established: 18 February 1939  
Original Town Hall established: 1881

The original Italianate town hall, built on this site in 1881, was replaced by a functional interwar building which opened here in February 1939. As the centre of local government, and representing all levels of government, the town hall was an important site for migrants.

Naturalisation and citizenship ceremonies were conducted here by the mayor, as the Queen's representative. British and Commonwealth migrants automatically had citizens' rights on arrival. In 1949 Australian citizenship was introduced which gave the option to European residents to be naturalised. After 1956 non-European migrants could apply for citizenship if they had been living in Australia for fifteen years. Citizenship is an official and formal acceptance of a migrant into Australian society.

Campaigns to immunise children against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and poliomyelitis were a dramatic part of health care in the 1950s. Immunisation clinics were run at the town hall for hundreds of children during the second half of the twentieth century. Council's free immunisation was attractive to all residents, including migrants who had seen many children die from these diseases in their own countries.

Liverpool Town Hall also housed the library from 1956, which was an important source of information for all members of the community. Attitudes towards other cultures began to change in the 1970s and gradually books and information became available in languages other than English. Liverpool Library is located 100m further north in George Street.

In 1987 Council moved to new premises in Hoxton Park Road.



6

## HILDA M DAVIS SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE

Established: 1973

This centre was named after Hilda M Davis, an outstanding local citizen who supported community activities in Liverpool from her retirement until she died aged ninety-nine in 1986.

It seems appropriate that the foundation stone of the Hilda Davis Senior Citizens Centre was laid by the Prime Minister and Federal member for Werriwa, Gough Whitlam on 25 August 1973. During Whitlam's government, multiculturalism was officially recognised and a policy of assisting and fostering other cultures within Australia was established. This centre has become a focal point for many migrant communities to meet, especially before they have found their own communal space. Recently many Iraqi migrants have settled in Liverpool and for them, this centre has become a meeting place. Bigge Park opposite, is also used for spontaneous gatherings.

The Galbally Report of 1978 recommended establishing services to help successful settlement of people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The report also encouraged maintenance of community languages and cultures. Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre was established in November 1979 and was one of the first such services to support migrants and refugees. The centre is still active, nearly thirty years later, offering groups and individuals facilities such as: meeting rooms, a community library and computer access. It also helps families, children and elderly people, and assists with work placement and English language classes.

In Liverpool approximately a hundred and fifty different languages are spoken and the Centre offers information and interpretation services in many of these languages.



8

## AL AMANAH COLLEGE

Established: 2002

Al Amanah College was founded in 1998 at Bankstown by the Islamic Charity Project Association but soon became independent. This Al Amanah branch at Liverpool opened in 2002. Combining primary and secondary schooling, it has almost reached capacity with nearly six hundred students. Students come not only from Liverpool but across a wide area from Campbelltown to Bankstown, Parramatta and Auburn.

The school provides education as it says, 'with neither exaggeration or neglect'. Teaching is bilingual in English and Arabic. The school community also promotes the study of Arabic in free language classes for non-Arabic speaking people, as well as Saturday language schools at Guildford, Canterbury, Bankstown and Liverpool for children of Arabic speaking background.

Based on the religion of Islam, the school aims to offer a truly liberal education which promotes discussion and understanding of Islamic and Australian cultures and communities, avoiding extremist attitudes. It fosters communication between the pupils and the community to further mutual respect. Pupils from many cultures are welcomed including Arabic-speaking communities and the Afghanistani, Bosnian, Indian, and wider Australian community too.

Al Amanah actively involves itself in the community. It operates like other public schools in New South Wales, fundraising, supporting local community services and environmental activities.



9

## M'GOWEN CRESCENT HOUSES AND ROAD BUILT BY BRITISH MIGRANTS

Established: 1956-58

This street is the result of migrants pooling their resources. In 1955 British migrants living in hostels at East Hills and Heathcote (called Voyager Point today) started saving two shillings a week each towards buying a home. The group formed the Hammondville New Settlers Co-operative Building Society in May and purchased twenty eight acres which was part of a golf course, which used the early colonial home, Cullingwood as a clubhouse. Each of the twenty six families was allocated land by ballot, paying £250 for their block.

The first part of the project was to build a road to Council specifications by June 1956. None of the men had any experience building houses, except for a pipe-fitter and an electrician, so two carpenters were hired to speed up work. By Christmas 1957 migrant families moved into fifteen of the houses and by the end of 1958 all the homes were ready. Together, they had built homes for all the families which would have been impossible for each family to achieve alone.

The three-bedroom weatherboard homes all had tiled roofs, modern bathrooms and kitchens, with an outdoor toilet. They were not identical as each family chose their own design. Today several houses are still weatherboard and little altered, but more than half have been brick veneered. People from a variety of countries live here today and the street is a reminder of the advantages of group cohesion and cooperation to adjust and settle in a different country.



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## SV. BOGORODICA-PRECISTA (HOLY MOTHER OF GOD)

(Macedonian Orthodox Church)  
Established: 28 August 2002

This Macedonian Orthodox Church was officially opened on 28 August 2002 to meet the needs of a growing Macedonian community in Liverpool. In just two months, the community raised the funds to purchase the land.

There are over a thousand people from Macedonia living in Liverpool and the number is growing. Migrants from Macedonia and their children and other young people who identify with Macedonian culture attend church services and scripture classes here.

The Macedonian Orthodox Church is an independent and autonomous part of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church, found in Russia, the Balkans and parts of the Middle East. This Macedonian Orthodox Church is part of the external diocese of Australia and New Zealand.

The community would like to build a traditional Macedonian Orthodox Church here, as this architecture is familiar to them and would confirm their cultural identity. This will require a considerable effort by all the Macedonians who are committed to raising the funds for this project. The Church Committee will need to explain the plans and cultural style to Liverpool City Council and the wider Liverpool community.

This site has been used for religious worship for more than fifty years. The Seventh Day Adventists built a community hall here in 1962 and eventually a church which they sold on completion in 1985 to Latin American Adventists. The Macedonian Orthodox Church in Liverpool is continuing an important community tradition.



11

## MIGRANT HOSTELS AT VOYAGER POINT

Established: 1954

For many migrants, living here was their first experience of Australia. As a former resident said, 'it was a bleak place in the middle of nowhere.' Liverpool was a four kilometre walk and migrants going to work crossed the Georges River by a wooden footbridge to catch the train at East Hills station.

Two migrant hostels: East Hills and Heathcote, provided basic living conditions in former army huts. Migrants were crowded into a small space divided by a very flimsy wall, with minimal privacy. Family life was different; children whose parents were at work all day, were free to roam, meals were provided, although not necessarily tasty ones.

The first group of migrants, who came to live here in 1954, were British. English journalist Malcolm Muggeridge considered communal life in hostels 'abhorrent' to the 'English temperament' and assumed that European refugees would cope better because they had come from more desperate situations. However, many Europeans found this type of housing unpleasantly reminiscent of their experiences in concentration and refugee camps.

Some British migrants enjoyed the hostel community, yet others could hardly wait to find their own home. One migrant said, 'It's a bit of a no man's land; it's neither Britain nor Australia, so you can't judge the Australian way of life until you actually move off the hostel.'

Hundreds of migrants from different countries passed through the hostels. Many settled permanently in the Hammondville and East Hills area.



## IMAGE DETAILS

01: Buddha statue under pagoda, colour photograph by Virginia Macleod, 2008

02: Bruna Trimarchi in the cabbage patch, black and white negative, photograph by Therese Sweeney, 2005

03: Local Gandangara people re-enact the Dreamtime battle between Murragan and Gurangadge at the eel-dreaming site at Bent's Basin, September 1988, photograph by Nick Andrian, courtesy of Liverpool Leader.

04: Public chess board, colour photograph by Daniela Risteovski, 2008

05: A naturalisation ceremony at Liverpool Town Hall in the 1950s, black and white photograph, courtesy Liverpool City Library Collection

06: Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre Open Day at Hilda M Davis Senior Citizens Centre, colour photograph by Dany Ya, 2006

07: Old Liverpool hospital, 1876, black and white photograph, courtesy Liverpool and District Historical Society Collection.

08: Al Amanah College, colour photograph by Daniela Risteovski, 2008

09: A syndicate of 26 British migrant families in NSW, Australia, has reached halfway stage in a spectacular home building scheme that will provide them all with comfortable modern homes of their own. 1957, black and white photograph, National Archives of Australia: 2004/00287481, 1957/21/17

10: Altar inside Macedonian Orthodox Church at Liverpool, colour photograph by Daniela Risteovski, 2008

11: Nissen huts at Voyager Point, 1954, black and white photograph, image courtesy Liverpool and District Historical Society Collection