

CITY OF BAYSWATER

Harmony Week

ORIGIN STORIES

Celebrate our vibrant multicultural City with migration stories from students of John Forrest Secondary College.



Acknowledgement of Country

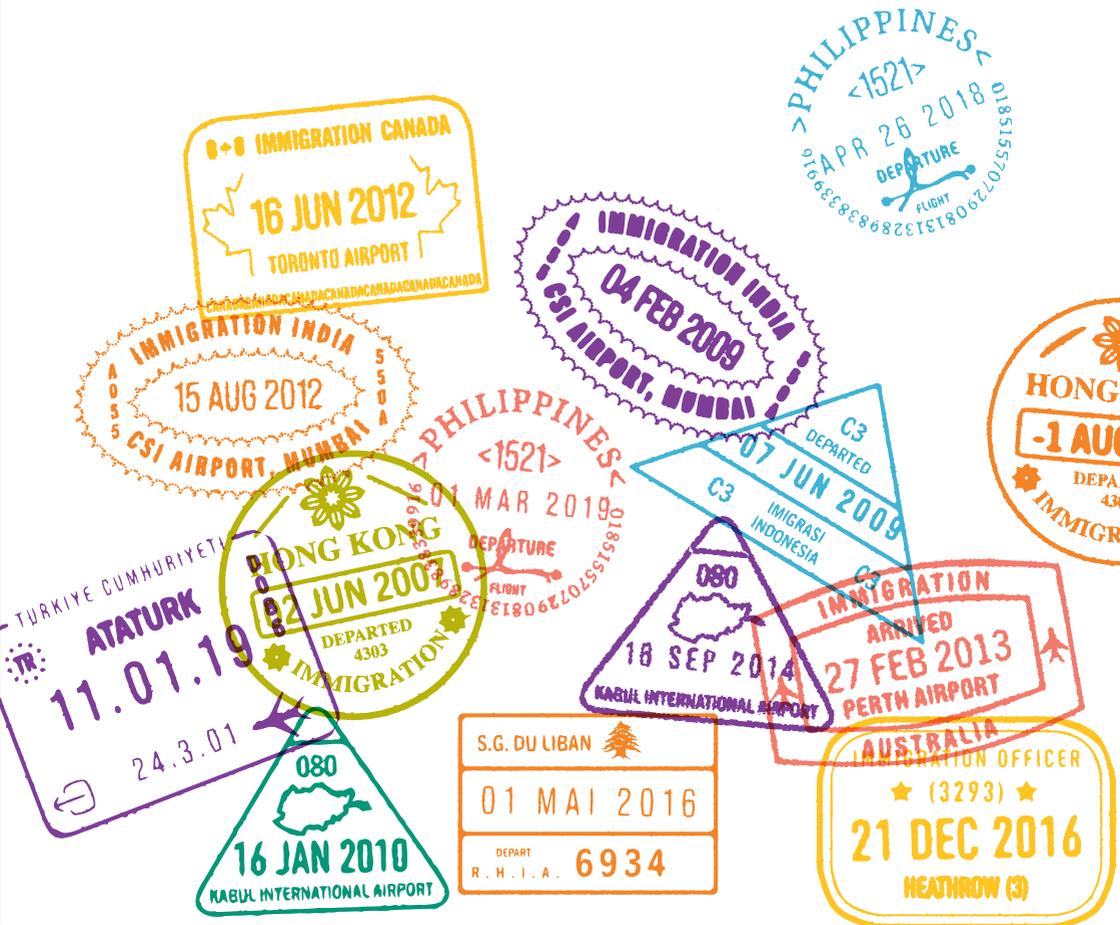
Ngalla City of Bayswater kaatanginy baalapa Noongar Boodja baaranginy, Wadjuk moort Noongar moort, boordiar's koorra koorra, boordiar's ye yay ba boordiar's boordawyn wah.

The City of Bayswater acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, and pays its respects to elders past, present and emerging.

About Harmony Week

Harmony Week is a significant time for Australians to come together and celebrate the nation's cultural diversity. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the benefits and strengths cultural diversity brings to our City.

At the City of Bayswater, we proudly celebrate all who call the City home. Our population is incredibly diverse, with nearly half of us born overseas and more than half of us with both parents born overseas.



Message from the Mayor



As a first generation Australian, Harmony Week holds special significance to me. I was fortunate enough to have been born in Australia, but grew up listening to stories of the journeys and sacrifices made by my mother's and father's families so I could live here. It was these stories of resilience and acceptance that have made me who I am today – a proud Italian-Australian with a strong respect for how diverse cultures enrich our community.

My Dad was seven years old and my Mum was nine when they arrived in Australia from Italy. Australia was seen as the land of opportunity, so both my grandfathers (nonnos) migrated by ship in the 1950s in the hopes of a better life.

They arrived in Australia without any formal qualifications and spoke very little English. They both found work and eventually saved enough money to bring their own families over. It was two years before my grandmothers (nonnas) would make the difficult month-long journey across the ocean with their children, to finally be reunited with their beloved husbands. I will always be grateful for the warm welcome my grandparents received upon migrating to Australia.

They quickly made friends with other Italian migrants and carried on traditions such as sausage and sauce-making. I thank the students of John Forrest Secondary College for sharing your stories with us. It is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the differences that make us unique, as well as the ties that bind us strongly together.

Cr. Filomena Piffaretti

Mayor

City of Bayswater

Message from the Principal

John Forrest Secondary College is a proudly diverse and multicultural school community, and we acknowledge and value this diversity at every opportunity.

This collection honours the migration journeys of our students and their families.

Migration is both an individual and collective experience. While it is often accompanied by a sense of optimism and excitement at increasing life opportunities, this may simultaneously conflict with leaving behind connections to familiar people and places.

We are thankful for the courage of these families to migrate, enabling these students to bring their heritage and culture to our College. Every student and family contribute to the diversity that enriches our understanding of the world, and the people in it.

I am grateful to these students and their families for sharing their stories.

Denise Robinson

Principal

John Forrest Secondary College



Malak



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, DAD FROM IRAQ

While the boat bumped along, my father waited and prayed that he would get to Australia. The war and the killing in Iraq made it a terrible place to live and a difficult place to survive. Growing up, his life had been difficult and his level of education wasn't very good. On the boat, my dad felt glad he was taking this risk. He didn't know it at the time, but he was taking this dangerous journey not only for himself, but for his future family, too.

My dad was surprised at how different Australia was. He had never seen such a clean, beautiful and safe place! My dad felt safe for the first time in many years, and really appreciated how the Australian people were treating him. They seemed relaxed and welcoming.

As my dad was completely alone in Perth with no friends or family, he had to find a job and start working straight away to pay his rent. My dad didn't understand English at all, and at first, he couldn't speak a word. Every day, my dad tried hard to improve his English and a few months later, he decided to open a business. He thought, I am good at being a mechanic so I should open a mechanic shop! My dad decided to get qualified for this, and in time, he started his own business. He had achieved so much and had to rely completely on himself as he was still alone in this new country.

Months later, a special month came up called Ramadan, where you need to fast from 5.30am to 6pm. Not a single thing is allowed in your mouth. After 6pm each evening, families and friends come together to eat. My dad really did miss having feasts and going out with his family during Ramadan. He knew it would be a lonely time for him. As soon as the special month began, a few Arabs knocked on his door in the evening, with traditional Arab food for him! My dad felt so relaxed and happy with this welcome and he realised Ramadan is still celebrated all over the world.

That night, he decided to go for a drive when he saw a huge mosque! People had gathered there and were praying and talking with one another. To my dad, it was beautiful. Here, in Perth, he could make his dreams come true and still celebrate important traditions with others who shared his beliefs and culture!

A few years later, he met my mother, got married and had kids. Because of his courage and hard work, I got to experience the best life! It's a safe life. I even got to learn how to skateboard and do all the fun things that Australian kids get to experience. We are living a dream life!

Arteman

BORN IN IRAN



I was born in a city known as Karaj, which is right next to the capital city of Iran. My mother and father were planning on coming to Australia for a better future and because of their religious beliefs. My mother is Bahá'í, a religion that is targeted by the theocratic regime of Iran, thus we would be denied basic rights such as access to university-level education due to our religion.

Whilst I lived in Iran, I spent a lot of time at my grandparents' house watching cartoons and going to the park. I also attended kindergarten until we left, which was a little after I turned five.

My mother was very excited to come to Australia as she had some family here and wanted me to grow up in a peaceful place. My mother and I left Iran to arrive in Turkey and became refugees. My father could not join us but after a couple of weeks, my maternal grandparents, thankfully, got to Turkey as well. My grandparents, mother and I all lived together in an apartment in Kayseri, Turkey. My mother had to work hard to support us all, so I spent most of my time with my grandparents. I also attended primary school in Turkey for six months.

Turkish schools are definitely different to what it's like here in Australia. For example, there are two different groups of students attending the same Turkish school. One attends the school from 8am-12pm, and the other from 12-4pm. The size of the schools also differs in that my Turkish school did not have an oval and therefore we played sport and had physical education lessons on asphalt. The most significant difference, however, is the fact that it was acceptable for students to be physically punished.

After waiting for two years in Turkey, we were finally granted our Australian visas! My mum always used to tell me about the lifestyle in Australia and the countless opportunities on offer. Now that we are here, I'm experiencing it all for myself. I love Perth. I've been here for almost 10 years now. My good friends are here, and I know my way around. My favourite activity is going for drives along the coast with my mum.

Jasmeh



BORN IN INDIA

We still hold that moment in our hearts like a landmark, the moment when we said our last goodbyes to family before leaving for Perth. In the taxi, everyone's tears came down like bullets. We finally made it to the busy airport in India. Our plane arrived, and it was time to say, 'Goodbye India'.

We peered out the taxi window on the way to our new home, looking for people riding kangaroos. But what we saw was so much more magnificent than we had ever imagined! Perth was paradise to us. At first, our minds were filled with questions like, What is it with these peoples' accents? and Why are Australians so open and so loud? As the days went by, we became more used to it all and things seemed to make more sense. On our first Sunday, we went to a temple. It was wonderful to be amongst people from India again. It was soon time for me to start school. My first day was quite surprising. In India, we get straight into our schoolwork, but here, we had an exercise class before we even did any work!

A few years later, my English had improved, and things became much easier for me. I remember the first time I got to play sport with the kids in my class. We were playing cricket and I had no idea how to play, but when I got the bat in my hands, it blew the ball miles into the air, and everyone clapped. I felt really appreciated then and it was nice to feel a sense of belonging. So, I started playing more cricket. I was batting well until the ball got into my hands! I just threw the ball at the batsman, and was bamboozled when the kids shouted at me, "Hey, what are you doing?" I didn't realise I had done something wrong and was in the 'bad books' for a while.

Years passed and I thankfully improved my cricket skills. My dad gave me my first cricket equipment. It was just a bat and pads; nothing else. Dad signed me up to a team at the Morley Bayswater Cricket Club. Luckily, my bowling had improved by then. I felt like I was unstoppable. From a boy that couldn't even bowl, I started playing like a god.

I am truly grateful for what my parents have done for me. They gave up a lot to give me such big, new opportunities in Perth. I appreciate their hard work and support. I couldn't ask for anything more.

Arezo



BORN IN AFGHANISTAN

My family is originally from Afghanistan. We lived in Kabul, the capital. My father migrated to Australia to give us a better life. My mother and siblings stayed in Afghanistan until it was too unsafe for us to stay. We fled to Indonesia and waited there for seven years. Seven years of waiting to get to Australia and see my father again.

Those seven years were the hardest, but in some ways, it was exciting and fun. There were many Afghan refugees like us in Indonesia, therefore we still had our culture and tradition. On our Afghani holidays such as Eid and Nowruz, we could still celebrate together.

The Afghan people in Indonesia worked hard to keep their culture alive. We cooked our traditional Afghan food like Manto, Bolani and Kabuli Pulao. On special days we wore our traditional Afghan clothing and visited each other's houses. We Afghans value hospitality, loyalty and modesty. During Nowruz, our elders used to tell us proverbs to teach us about life. When I was in Indonesia, I went to a lot of classes because I wanted to learn more, just like I do now.

After those seven years, we were told we were finally allowed to go to Australia. I was super excited! I wanted to learn about Australia's culture! On the 13th of January 2023, we arrived in Perth, WA. The air smelt fresh and I was just bubbling with excitement! My first thoughts were, "Their accent is cool, and the people are so nice". I thought back to all the things my family and I went through; happy, stressful, challenging and fun memories flashed through my mind. My family and I finally reunited with my dad. I was so happy.

Now I live in Perth, I like to go to picnics and hiking with my family in Kings Park. I really like the view of the city and the river from there.

“ The Afghan people in Indonesia worked hard to keep their culture alive. We cooked our traditional Afghan food and on special days we wore our traditional Afghan clothing and visited each other's houses. ”

Ibrahim



BORN IN SYRIA

My family and I fled war-torn Syria to arrive in Lebanon in 2011 to escape the conflict. We came to Lebanon because at the time, only a few countries would accept Syrian passports due to the civil war. We lived in Lebanon for years without knowing what to do next, and although it was better than Syria, it was still a serious situation. Unlike some others, we were fortunate to have a nice house thanks to the two jobs my dad obtained as a stonemason and taxi driver. While living in the hills of Lebanon was lovely for us kids, it wasn't so good for my parents, who were trying to find a way out.

“ While living in the hills of Lebanon was lovely for us kids, it wasn't so good for my parents, who were trying to find a way out. ”

We eventually succeeded after three years of living in Lebanon. We made it out and landed in Australia, but the struggle wasn't over. For one thing, we didn't speak English, and in a country where English is spoken, that's not ideal. While my siblings and I were able to learn English in a matter of months, my parents weren't as fortunate because my dad had to work so much, and my mum was still adjusting. We had to move houses and schools several times before we settled where we are today.

While I'm content with where I am right now, I still miss the past so much. For example, even though I don't remember Syria all that well, I still remember Lebanon, where I had all the time in the world, the best friends I could ask for, one of the best houses you could find, and even a garden growing strawberries in the backyard.

As much as I miss Lebanon, I wouldn't want to return because while I was there I was oblivious to the hardships my parents and older siblings had to endure in order to provide for us. If I were to return, I would be much more aware of everything, and if I chose to remain unaware and ignore the reality of life there, I would cause my parents pain. If I returned to Lebanon now, I would probably need to stop going to school and get a job in order to help support my family.

Avnoor



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, FAMILY FROM INDIA

My parents and brother migrated from India to Australia. They thought life would be much better here for my brother, since I hadn't even been born yet. They knew Australia would be cleaner, safer and more liveable for us.

The entire plane trip to Perth was very exciting for my parents. Leaving the place where they had lived for so many years and the extended family they lived with was a challenge. They would miss our relatives' daily visits. It was nerve-wracking for my parents and the thought of going to live in a totally different 'world' with such unfamiliar people was the most nail-biting thing of all.

Living in Australia, I love going to the city because it's so nice just to get out of my house and see something different. There is always something to see. The food in the city tastes and smells scrumptious. The main thing I love about Australia is how caring and welcoming everyone is; even if you don't know someone, they smile at you as they walk by. That is something you most definitely will not see in India!

Like Australians, the people in India love playing and watching sports such as cricket and hockey, which is also India's national sport. They place a great deal of value on social activities, particularly with family, such as visiting grandparents. They are also quite religious and love going to temples and practising yoga.

Even though I don't remember much about India, I do remember the delicious spicy smell of the food in the air, shopping at a seven-storey mall, and obviously all my relatives! I also remember visiting Shimla, which is at the bottom of the Himalayan mountains, with my family. I remember that one day, I was entrusted with holding the eggs on the way home. Suddenly, a bunch of monkeys swarmed around me, and one monkey jumped up and slapped me, so I went tumbling! But the only thing I was worried about were the eggs I dropped while tumbling down.

I am so glad my parents decided to move to Australia because I find it to be much safer and more peaceful here. The government here is much better too. Australia is a lot more developed than India with so many well-maintained, free facilities. I appreciate how clean and organised Perth is. I am happy to call Perth my home.

“ The main thing I love about Australia is how caring and welcoming everyone is. ”

Eizen



BORN IN CANADA, FAMILY FROM THE PHILIPPINES

It has been a very long time since my family moved to Perth, and almost everything changed. Our lives went from boring to epic! I live with my parents and my younger sister, and before we came to Australia, we lived in a townhouse with four floors at a place called Richmond Hill in Ontario, Canada. Although my sister and I were born in Canada, my parents were born in the Philippines and we were raised the Filipino way: religious, polite and respectful, especially to elders. In Canada, I loved eating crispy Eggo waffles with butter every day for breakfast. Sometimes I ate traditional Filipino dishes like Adobo and Sinigang.

I really didn't enjoy going to school in Canada due to the fact that I was very shy and I had only one friend. The weather in Canada is horrible with temperatures in the negatives. By the time I turned seven, my parents were sick of the cold, and decided to move to Australia.

At first, I really didn't want to leave because I would miss Canada. I was extremely worried I wouldn't make any friends and that I would be leaving my only friend at school. In the last few months there, I realised the benefits of migrating to Australia and I kept bragging about going to sunny Australia!

Once our application for residency in Australia was approved, my parents quickly began packing. Riding the plane was a good experience – I loved watching movies. To pass the time, we also chatted about all of the amazing things we would see and do in Perth.

My first impressions were very positive. Outside, it was a thousand times hotter than Canada and there was no snow, almost like the Philippines that my parents came from.

School in Australia, in my opinion, is a truly amazing experience and it was easy for me to make friends. There were some difficulties though. Since we were new, we obviously didn't have a house and my parents didn't have jobs. Soon, they got jobs and rented a house for us.

Now, my family have made new friends and we can celebrate special festivals the Filipino way! We also go to church every Sunday and enjoy going to the beautiful beaches of Perth as it reminds us of the beaches in the Philippines. I am still amazed at how fantastic life is in Australia compared with other countries. I know my future will be wonderful!

Jessica



BORN IN INDONESIA

Indonesia is small and crowded, filled with noise and people. It sounds like cars honking, people bargaining and talking at once and calling for taxis. Indonesia smells like fuel, pandan, incense and durian.

My mother moved to Australia because she wanted a better education and to learn English. She also wanted to explore Australia. Once here, she missed her family and her hometown very much. She also missed the food and the people. I miss Indonesia a lot, too. I miss the food, my family, the people and the places I used to go to.

The difference between Australia and Indonesia is that the roads are smaller and there are so many more motorbikes. Along the roadside, there are small stores selling everything you need. Australians are more casual but in Indonesia you must behave in a more formal way unless you are with friends. School in Indonesia gives students a break where they have to go to a different place. At the end, you must pray. It's quite common in Indonesia to get married very young. The good thing about Australia is that there are many places to visit here and you meet new people.

What my family likes about Australia is that there are many different places where you can shop and buy food from different cultures. My mum has made many friends in Australia and still talks to her good friends in Indonesia.

What I like the most about Australia is that I can play badminton and can go to great places to hang out with my friends.

“ My mum has made many friends in Australia and still talks to her good friends in Indonesia. ”

Johan



BORN IN THE PHILIPPINES

“You guys can finally come to Australia!” Dad exclaimed from his home in Perth. Wow! We were overjoyed. However, migrating was a lot easier said than done. My Mum was hesitant to tell the rest of the family, but she knew it had to be done. When she told our relatives, they were all very emotional. Some were rejoicing as they knew my brother and I would have a better life in Australia, but some could not share the happiness. My grandad was especially upset as Filipinos value family over almost everything and he viewed our migration as a move away from the family. Nevertheless, my mum had made up her mind; we were moving from the polluted, rainy Philippines to a clean, hot, dry country called Australia.

We moved to Australia when I was just two years old. I still remember the airport in the Philippines as it was so busy, cramped and dirty. By the time we boarded the plane, it was packed with people from places all over the world on their way to Australia.

When we arrived in Perth, we lived in a tiny house with a small backyard in a very scary area. It was better than nothing and we lived there for a few years. After my little brother was born, we moved to a bigger house.

I still miss the smell of Filipino food on the street and our relatives who are still back there. But, apart from a few hiccups, we have been enjoying the opportunities here in Perth. We appreciate the kindness of the Perth people who welcomed us, and love going to the beach together on the weekend.

“ I still miss the smell of Filipino food on the street and our relatives who are still back there. ”

Bailey



BORN IN KAZAKHSTAN

I was born on 16 October, 2010 in Aktobe, Kazakhstan. Although I was only very young when I was there, I have been back for a holiday and know that it is interesting and very different to Australia. Kazakhstan is in the middle of Asia, below Russia so they speak Russian, as well as our own language, Kazakh. It is very similar to Russian but a little harder to learn.

“ I like the different types of food, culture and just Australia in general. ”

We moved to Australia because my dad was Australian and we moved here because of his job. We were happy about moving to Australia because of its higher economy and better living conditions. We also had fresher, colder water than up in Kazakhstan. We have also come to love it at the beach because Kazakhstan didn't have a beach where we could swim in all the time.

I remember very little about coming to Australia because I was only very young... my little brother Sam wasn't even born and I hadn't even turned one year old.

My first impressions of Australia as far as I remember were great. We have good food (because I had never tried any food in Australia back then, and since Australia is a multicultural society, we had many different types of foods) and Australia was more diverse, unique (sort of) and more interesting because of the culture. My impressions of Australia were very great and I love Australia.

I like the different types of food, culture and just Australia in general. I like the different landscapes in Australia. The Kazakhstan landscape is mainly cold desert called tundra. The best thing I like about Australia are the parks and the beaches. There are so many places to visit and relax. Australia feels more lively and welcoming as it has many different structures and modern things. My favourite place in Perth is the city or the beach.

Charlize



BORN IN THE PHILIPPINES

I knew it would be hot in Perth. My dad migrated before the rest of the family and we arrived much later on. He said that when we got here, it would be summer and was going to be extremely hot. Well, he wasn't wrong, but I didn't expect it to be that hot! I always held my hair up all the time with my hand because I wasn't used to such dry heat. I was always desperate for something cold to drink or anything at all to stop my frustration with the heat.

When we got here, I noticed that there are lots of parks around whenever we go out in the car. There seem to be parks everywhere in Perth. I don't know why, but I thought there would be dangerous snakes that would pop out from the bushes and chase you until you got tired of running! I didn't really go to the park when I was back in the Philippines. Maybe that's because there weren't many parks there. Now, I enjoy the parks around Perth.

In the Philippines, my house was surrounded with green grass and plants. There were so many stray dogs and cats which would come up to the front of my house and leave poop at our door! There were lots of friendly kids who played outside on the street. My siblings and I would always join in and play street games with them after we woke up from our daily nap.

Life in Perth is honestly a lot better when compared with the Philippines. In the Philippines, there's so much rubbish around and the air is very polluted because of the vehicles that produce fumes. Australia is much cleaner compared to Philippines. We really appreciate the clean, fresh air and environment.

“ I don't know why, but I thought there would be dangerous snakes that would pop out from the bushes and chase you until you got tired of running! ”

Jiashu



BORN IN CHINA

Four years ago, COVID started. That was the last time I visited China and sadly the last time I was able to see my Grandma. To be honest, my memories of my life and home in China are blurry. The only thing that seems to be clear in my mind is my grandparents. All the things I can remember about my life in China were with them: Grandma riding a bicycle with me to school; Grandma cooking traditional Chinese dinners such as porridge, fried rice, steamed rice, with lots of other dishes to go with it. I clearly remember Grandpa coming home with random candy treats for me and taking a walk down the street with me every night after dinner. Unfortunately, my Grandma passed away at the start of this year due to COVID and I couldn't go back. The only thing I miss since migrating is them.

“ My life here in Australia is just how I like it. It's about my schoolmates, work, my home and just driving around Morley. ”

My family migrated to Australia because back then China wouldn't allow couples a second birth. China had a one-child policy. We are grateful for the life we have here. The lifestyle here in Australia seems to fit with me. It's different from my life in China in that, at the start, in Australia I didn't have many close friends and they seemed to live far away compared with my friends in China. My life in Australia may seem lonely to others, but the people who really know me realise that I am happy with this peaceful life as I'm not a party person. I like to stay home all day rather than going out.

My life here in Australia is just how I like it. It's about my schoolmates, work, my home and just driving around Morley. Nowadays my favourite thing to do is to hop on Discord on my computer and start a battle with my friends!

Leanne



BORN IN THE PHILIPPINES

It all started in 2020. My mother was about to go to Australia but unfortunately her flight was cancelled due to COVID. I never imagined that two years later, we would all go to Australia together as a family! Before being sent off on our new journey, we had a farewell party with all our friends. This kind of party is called a Despedida. It was a crazy party as huge as a blue whale. I barely could sleep afterwards. In the morning, I had to wake up at 4am which made me look like a racoon with my big eye bags. I remember going to the airport like a zombie because I was excited and exhausted at the same time.

On our flight from Manila, I was bracing myself for the worst! I was expecting spiders, snakes and all types of reptiles everywhere in Australia. It was a good thing I had a friend with me who assured me it wouldn't really be that dangerous! Waiting in Sydney for our flight to Perth made me anxious. There was a long immigration line to follow. Four hours later, so many swarming people were getting on our plane.

We ended up having to rebook our flight. My family and my friend's family were very worried when we got to Perth as we suddenly realised how alone we were in a new country with no one to accompany us.

Although Australia is a wonderful country, I still miss all my friends, family and especially the festivals in the Philippines. The festivals in the Philippines were amazing and we would either throw a celebration party or attend one every three to four months! I love Filipino culture from our food to our festivals. I just love everything about it.

We are grateful for the opportunities Perth has given us and we are settling in well. In Perth, my family loves the beaches because of the calm and clean waters, as well as the beautiful white sand. I love the smell of sea water and the wonderful birds flying around. As my mother says, "The world is always spinning". This means you never know what will come next!

Manan



BORN IN PERTH, FAMILY FROM INDIA

Before my parents lived in Australia, they lived in India: a life of sacred cows, Holi and Diwali festivals changed into migration, worry and praying they would make it through the challenges. It all began when my parents announced the news to friends and family that they were moving to Melbourne.

Everyone was shattered and in tears! “Why are you going? Stay here, please!”, they begged. My parents replied, “We’re moving for our kids; we need to give them a high-quality education and we can’t do that in India”. Before my parents left, everyone gave them a tight hug goodbye, and as the taxi arrived, they all burst into tears again.

When my parents walked out of the Melbourne airport, they were surprised and pleased to see how multicultural it was, and they got comfortable in Melbourne. After five years, my parents decided to move somewhere quieter, so they took a plane to Perth.

My parents worried on the plane, “Perth might be a bad decision. How are we going to get a job there?” When my parents arrived, they took a taxi to their rental. My parents began looking for work immediately. My dad ended up as a car washer and my mum finally got hired at Subway. They bought their first car: a Hyundai Accent. By that time, my mom was pregnant. When it was time to go to the hospital for my birth, my dad was going as fast as he could to get the car started!

My parents took me to the golden temple in Perth, where they go to pray. The priest in the main hall prayed for the baby, asking the guru what letter my name should begin with. The guru chose the letter ‘M’! My parents rushed out of the temple joyfully and tried to come up with something unique, “Mason? Mack? Or what about Manan?” After my parents named me, they thought a lot about my future and did whatever they could to support me. It has been hard work for my parents building a life here. Because of them, my life has been easier, and I have had opportunities I never would have had otherwise.

Ngai



BORN IN SCOTLAND, FAMILY FROM HONG KONG

My dad moved our family from Scotland to Australia because he works outdoors and the weather is so much better in Perth! My parents were very happy to move here.

Before Scotland, my family came from Hong Kong. It's very hot and humid most of the time, but cold in winter. You can see many mountains and tall buildings near the sea. The city has noisy buses and trams, and it's very windy along the harbour. The streets of Hong Kong have many different smells, some nice and some... not so nice! The thing I miss the most in Hong Kong are the food shops and the model shops. Some of my favourite dishes are roast goose, sweet and sour pork, and wonton noodles.

I think most Hong Kong people value education and money the most. That's why most people study and work so hard because most things, like housing, is expensive there. When people are not studying or working, children play games, young adults go to night clubs or karaoke and a lot of the older people like to gamble. My favourite festivals are the Mid-Autumn Festival, Chinese New Year and the Spring Equinox.

I don't remember moving to Australia because I was only one year old at that time. My parents told me they liked it here very much except for the very high temperatures in the Pilbara. We appreciate having a nice house, clean air, the blue skies and dry heat. My favourite place is a camping spot on the edge of the forest. My favourite thing to do in Perth is go bike riding with my friends.

“ The streets of Hong Kong have many different smells, some nice and some... not so nice! ”

Panshul



BORN IN MAURITIUS

Moving to Australia would be a massive change for us since we lived on a small island known as Mauritius. My parents decided it would be a good idea to move to Australia for my siblings and I to have a better life in terms of school and jobs. Moving from quite a small island to a huge one like Australia would be somewhat scary for us since it was a mystery to us.

Packing was not that hard, though we did include a lot of things to remind us of home. My parents had planned everything carefully. The toughest part about leaving Mauritius was telling our family. I think my brother had a really hard time since he was still a small kid.

It was almost time to go. We were nervous before and now our stress levels got even worse. After all the planning my parents did, they forgot to organise accommodation in Perth! They frantically looked everywhere online for a suitable hotel in Perth that wasn't too expensive, but most of them were booked out. Now they were really stressing! If we had nowhere to go when we got to Perth, would we end up on the streets?

Finally, a miracle happened! My great grandfather owned land in Mauritius and because of this he had lots of money. Luckily for us, he was in Australia at the time and was able to organise a place for us to stay. After two days of stress, we were finally able to rest easy and take the flight without any extra worries.

The day had come. The first thing we noticed was how hot it was compared with Mauritius; for over there, it rained a lot and had tropical weather but in Perth it was very hot and dry. My parents weren't very good at English, then, but could still get around a bit with the little they knew. However, once we got into the taxi, the driver said, "Where we off to, mate?" Well, my parents were so confused? What did mate mean? Surely not what their dictionary said? Luckily, they pretended to understand, nodded, smiled and just showed the address!

Sixteen years have passed now and everything that was weird is now normal. We still learn something new every day about life and what people do here in Perth. My parents have good jobs and are still studying and learning more. My family and I always go the beach, no matter what, because the beach is so refreshing! No matter what is going on in life, we will always make it there.

Rohan



BORN IN KUWAIT

The whole place was covered in sand but I do miss the ambience of Kuwait. It was fresh, clean and peaceful, except when we were rushing to work or school! My friends from Kuwait asked, “When will I see you again?” but I had to move to Australia, and they couldn’t do anything about it. To be honest, I was thrilled and extremely sad at the same time. We had relatives to join in Perth and the job opportunities for my parents were perfect. I really miss the city of lights and my friends from school and church and my neighbours as well.

On the plane we were all nervous about what would happen when we got to Perth. Due to the air pressure on the plane, I had severe ear pain and thought I was going to explode, but we sorted it out. It was just another thing to add to our stress about moving countries. When my family and I arrived in Australia, it was pouring heavily, and we were saturated in icy water. What a welcome!

We were quite eager to meet my cousins, especially the baby who was so cute! They welcomed us happily and assisted us in locating a rental home and later on, we were able to build a new, spacious family home.

My younger brother was sad at first as he had been looking forward to starting school. However, because he was only four years old when we arrived here, he had to wait a whole year! My father had a Master of Commerce and 25 years of experience as an accountant in Kuwait. My father tried to find work and he was turned down many times. He didn’t work for a year, then a family friend got him a job at BGC as a factory supervisor. Luckily, my mother landed her job as a software engineer.

My brothers learned English so quickly and got the Aussie slang from their friends. But it wasn’t as easy for me to make friends because I was struggling to learn Australian English. Cricket saved me and once I started practising at the nets at school, it all became easier.

Now, my family and I have lived peacefully for nearly 5 years and we celebrate our cultural events with family, calling our relatives in Kuwait and India to share our joy. Every holiday in Perth, we try to explore WA. So far, we have been to Albany and Carnarvon and many places in between. Our favourite place is Busselton as we stayed at a place right on the beach and made sandcastles by the sea.

Suhad



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, PARENTS FROM JORDAN

My parents were originally born in Jordan in the Middle East. However, my brother and I were born in Victoria, Australia and my sister was born in Perth. Before my father got married, he was searching to find the best country so his future kids would have the best education. So, he decided to migrate to Australia!

My father travelled to Melbourne in 2005 but returned to Jordan so he could get married in 2010. After a year with his new wife in Melbourne, I was born in Geelong Hospital. We settled in well. When my grandma was fighting cancer, we rushed back to Jordan to care for her as her health, thankfully, improved. In Jordan, I often ate my favourite traditional dish called Mansaf. It's made of rice, yoghurt and meat, and it is delicious! I went to a school while we were staying there, and it was great fun getting to know all about my language (Arabic). I also learnt more about Islam. Islam means we believe in one God. Like Christians, we have a holy book called the Quran.

When we went back to Australia to live, we settled in Perth. We knew we would be safe and protected by the nicest people here in Australia. We moved into a nice neighbourhood and everyone there was so nice to us! They even welcomed us with some treats. After a few weeks, we found a great school, West Morley Primary School. While we settled into our new school, my father had a hard time finding work, especially during COVID, but he persisted, and was finally employed as an enterprise architect with WA Police. After I graduated from primary school, it was now safe to officially call myself a high schooler!

During the recent summer holidays, my grandma became sick again. My father decided to go to Jordan and visit his mother. He was there for two weeks and I was sad. I didn't want my father to go but I couldn't tell him, because no matter what stands in the way, he will always support his family.

A week after he returned, we heard the most devastating news in our lives! My grandma passed away on the 10th of February 2023. Sadly, we couldn't go to her funeral, because in our culture when a person dies, they must be buried on the day of their death. My whole family burst into tears, but we knew our lives couldn't stop there. We had to move on. I realised my grandma was never scared of her death because she knew her life was controlled by God, and God knew her and had a plan for her.

Remember, it is not the end of the world if something sad happens! It is part of life. We can slowly start to enjoy the beauty and opportunities that our country provides!

Yimima



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, FAMILY FROM ETHIOPIA

My family originally came from Ethiopia before I was born to escape the difficulties and give us a better life with more opportunities. I recently went to Ethiopia on holiday and honestly, in my opinion, it was the best! I really miss Ethiopian food because it is traditional and unique. The main differences are the way we eat the food, and the special ingredients which make the dishes taste sweet or spicy.

“...in Ethiopia there is almost always a shop right next to where you live, so you really don't have to walk very far.”

One of the most noticeable things in Ethiopia which is different from Australia is the roads. In Ethiopia, the roads are bumpy and don't have lanes. But in Australia, the roads are safer and more organised. As well as the roads being unsafe in Ethiopia, they are very busy with a lot of traffic. Cars, buses and trucks often cause accidents. That is why I don't recommend driving in Ethiopia at all, but in Australia, it is OK to drive because there is a much lower risk of having a car crash.

Shopping is also different because most of the shops in Perth are in the city but in Ethiopia there is almost always a shop right next to where you live, so you really don't have to walk very far. It also comes in handy when there is a party or event and you forgot to buy drinks or something. You can just cross the road and buy what you need.

There are many more differences between Ethiopia and Australia but I pick Australia because I was born here and have grown to be a part of this place now. We love going out as a family and enjoying Perth, and we are grateful for the safe and easy life we have here.

Siyona



BORN IN INDIA

It all started in India. India is very colourful and beautiful. It's a very tight and compact country with a rapidly growing population. The sounds of cars and vehicles surround the roads and playful birds tweet as the canal whispers underneath. The spices of India roam the streets giving the authentic smell of cooking food.

In 2006, my dad was studying engineering, but he wasn't engaged and wanted something challenging. His dream was to work in America or Australia. A few months later, he got a job in Australia! My dad was so excited about the new job as an engineering manager. He hopped on the flight and flew to a place that we had never heard of...Perth! As soon as he stepped out into the new country, he knew this was exactly the place he had been looking for.

My dad worked for about a year and lived in a house in Mandurah. He even bought a car and learned how to drive. He loved the new place; the pure, fresh air, the friendly neighbourhood and the clean roads. Dad went back to India to tell his story to his parents. This is when he met my mum. They fell in love at first sight and soon after, my dad brought my mum to Australia too.

My mum had mixed emotions. On one hand, she was going to explore a new country to call home with my dad, and on the other, they were leaving their home country and family. Mum had feared the unfamiliar language and culture of Australia. But dad convinced her that it was a peaceful, safe place with beautiful nature.

They both lived at the Mandurah house for a year, but one day my dad's face was covered with tears. This is when everything came crashing down. My dad lost his job, so they were forced to return to India because they didn't have permanent residence. They sold their car and went back to India with disappointment in their eyes.

One year later, I was born. That was the most amazing thing that ever happened to them. Then dad knew it was time to try to go back to Australia. Day and night, my dad applied for permanent residency, a visa, a passport and a job. Then, at the final moment when all of us were giving up, we were given all of the approvals!

Everything went smoothly after that. We went to Mandurah and oh boy, it was wonderful! This perfect place helped my mum open her eyes and understand they had made the best decision.

That is how I came to Australia. Fighting against obstacles and writing your own destiny can happen anywhere at any time. Never look back, just keep on going. That's what my family did. My dad always said, "There is no success without hardship" – Sophocles.

Shreya



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, MUM FROM INDIA

The sight of birds, the sound of a breeze and the smell of hot chips; Australia!

My mum was coming to Australia from New Delhi, India. My dad's family had been living in Australia since my grandpa opened a restaurant in Australia, although it was the first time my mum had even been to another country. She was excited about a new beginning, but sad to leave loved ones behind, along with her childhood memories.

My mum's first impression of Australia was how beautiful the roads and the structure of the buildings were, and how clean the environment is. In India, the roads are crowded, they don't have any lanes, and there is lots of air, water and sound pollution. You can smell foods like biriyani, dal, roti, naan and curry coming from the street vendors 24/7. That was hard to leave behind!

My mum speaks Hindi, which is very different from English. Her favourite Hindi word is "pagal" which means crazy. Her ancestors passed down a Hindi proverb, 'Not everything that glitters is gold' because on the outside, something may seem pretty but the inside may not be the same, and my mum experienced that growing up.

My mum's favourite thing to do in India was to travel from city to city, go to the temple to pray, exercise, and listen to Bollywood music. In Australia, she loves going to the beach and walking among the seagulls with the sand at her feet, breathing in the salty air. India doesn't really have any beaches. Indian weather is similar to the seasons in Australia, so it hasn't been too hard to cope with. Overall, my mum settled into Australia very well. In 2010, I was born in WA. I really appreciate my school and think the quality of education here is much better, as when my mum shares stories about school in India, it seems like it was a hard life.

My mum loves this welcoming, multicultural country and is proud of her family, her job and her house in Morley which is a good neighbourhood. It's safe here, the shops are close and she can drive a car! All in all, my mum is proud of her achievements and grateful for the life she has now.

I think she made the right choice in coming to Australia, as it's a multicultural country and our Indian culture can be passed down through the future generations. I would still love to go to India and see how it's changed over the years, and to find out if I really do prefer WA! For now, I'm happy with continuing to make memories here with my family.

Shirani



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, PARENTS FROM INDIA

My parents arrived in Perth from India 35 years ago. My two elder sisters and myself were all born here. My Dad is a law enforcement officer and my mother works from home.

They both come from New Delhi, the capital city of India. They studied in Calcutta and met because their colleges were only one kilometre apart. They fell in love, got married and came to settle in Perth in 1988. My Dad chose Australia carefully as he had learnt about the rich culture, the lovely people, the amazing landscape and the lovely blue beaches. He had fallen in love with Australia when he was a teenager!

I have visited India with my parents and sisters many times and I love exploring and learning more. Travelling to different parts of India and observing the different cultures within the country is amazing. I admire their colourful traditional outfits and try to understand the different languages spoken in different places. I also enjoy the street food which is available on every corner.

As time has passed, my parents are now more Australian than Indian, having spent more of their lives here! They both love Australia and say this is one of the most beautiful places in the world and they would not leave Perth for anything.

I love Perth too and would love to explore different parts of Australia when I am older. But Perth is the place where I plan to grow old!

“As time has passed, my parents are now more Australian than Indian, having spent more of their lives here! ”

Sarah



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, FAMILY FROM ITALY

This is my grandma's story...

“Nuvole a pecorella aqua a catinelle” means if the clouds look like a flock of sheep, expect lots of rain. I heard this Italian saying a lot in my home country which makes sense, considering we lived in a farming town full of vineyards! Living in the country, the weather was extremely important. The grapevines needed a lot of water to grow and our livelihoods depended on that.

It was about 5am when we got up to get on the boat. I could hear the birds chirping and the carts pulled by oxen, rolling past our house as everyone else was getting ready to start work as usual early in the morning. I don't know how I felt about going to Australia, but I noticed this tingly feeling in my stomach. I could tell my parents were really stressed about migrating because they kept losing things and arguing, even though they had an excellent job offer to work in a vineyard in Perth.

Once on the boat, we went to get some breakfast. It was just a slop of porridge on a paper plate with a glass of milk! I already missed our amazing Italian pasta and pizza. I missed my house back home, and the smell of fresh bread that it held in its walls. That's when we went back to our room and found that it had been flipped upside down! Someone had stolen all of our money! I thought, Who would do this to us?

When we arrived in Perth, it was scorching hot and there were flies everywhere. It would take a while to get used to this! Could grapevines grow in this dry, hot weather? Anyway, I was excited about seeing all the unusual Australian animals that we had heard of in Italy. Luckily, my dad had already bought us a house in Perth. He worked hard on the vineyard for 10 years until the debt was paid off for the house. There was enough rain for the vines to grow successfully, after all.

City of
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