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MALAY MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA: A LONGUE DURÉE PERSPECTIVE, 17th–21st CENTURIES

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Introduction

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing in 2016 has it that there are at least 46,079 people of Malay ancestry.¹ The historically significant and rapidly growing Malay population in Australia has been the subject of a number of studies. However, they are largely segmented, in that such studies are either centred primarily around the Maccasans, the roles and experiences of indentured workers in Australia's pearling industry, Malays in islands surrounding islands of Australia, or those who settled as migrants in Western Australia.² In recent times, the motivations and experiences of recent Malay migrants from Malaysia to Australia has been the subject, albeit an isolated one, of critical enquiry.³ Contemporary studies on Malays in Australia have mostly been focussed on Malaysian migrants with little nuance and focus on Malays from other parts of Southeast Asia. No scholar has attempted to show the long and seamless presence which Malays have had in Australia stretching back from the seventeenth century into the twenty-first century.

This article fills the gap in the literature by providing a synergistic and *longue durée* account of the ventures of Malays to Australia and the nearby islands. We develop the argument that the growth of localised and cosmopolitan Malay communities in various phases of Australian history was borne out of four driving forces: economic

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity".

2 See for example Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (eds.), *Macassan History and Heritage: Journeys, Encounters and Influences* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013); Julia Martínez and Adrian Vickers, *The Pearl Frontier: Indonesian Labor and Indigenous Encounters in Australia's Northern Trading Network* (United States: University of Hawaii Press, 2015); Wan Hashim Wan Teh and A. Halim Ali, *Rumpun Melayu Australia Barat* (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999).

3 For a review of these works, see: Asmah Haji Omar, *The Malays in Australia: Language, Culture, Religion* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2008).

exchanges, inter-cultural mixing, the formation of social contracts and, above all, open migration policies. Further, we assert that what are currently referred to as “Australian Malays” or “Malays in Australia” were actually a composite of sub-ethnic groups hailing from different parts of Southeast Asia. These sub-ethnic groups may or may not see themselves as “Malays” upon their arrivals to Australia but were soon integrated with and/or incorporated into that wider ethnic category.

More to the point, we are conscious of the contestations over and elusiveness of the term “Malay” or “Malays” to describe the various ethnic subgroups that travelled into and eventually stayed in Australia over four centuries. In what follows, we explain – where necessary – the changing definitions of Malays, where they came from and how they came to be identified as such. A quick note about the usage of the term ‘Malay’ is in order here. Before the nineteenth century, the term was used by both natives in the region and also travellers to connote a group of people who spoke the Malay language and trace their origins to the Malay world, a geographical space that consists of what we know today as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines. This open-ended and linguistic understanding of Malay soon morphed into a racialised term following the advent of colonialism in Southeast Asia which included communities that came from Java and even creole Indians and Arabs who mingled and saw themselves as part of the Malay world. Upon the end of colonial rule in the 1950s onwards, the racialised definition of Malay persisted and is still used today in the Australian censuses and scholarly works.⁴

Indeed, in making the case for a *longue durée* history of Malays in Australia, we are cognizant of Anthony Milner’s cogent point:

Just who is ‘Malay’ and what it is to be ‘Malay’ remain open questions, and an attempt to establish a narrative over time for the ‘Malay people’ would confront profound disjunctures. Which of the many constituent ‘Malays’ should be given prominence, how do we disentangle one narrative from another, how can we convey lines of continuity where there appears only rupture? But if such concerns frustrate the task of giving an account of ‘the Malays’, it is this diversity and contention that makes ‘Malay studies’ so interesting, and ought properly to be our central concern.⁵

With the above observations in mind, our approach then is to transcend the protracted debates over Malayness in order to highlight the continuities and changes experienced by Malay migrants as they find their place within an evolving Australian multicultural domain. Covering more than four hundred years, we integrate primary sources such as censuses, newspaper articles and other official reports along with ethnographic studies

4 For a comprehensive discussion over shifting notions of Malayness, see: Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Malacca* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008) and Anthony C. Milner, *The Malays* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

5 Anthony C. Milner, *The Malays* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 16.

and other secondary sources. In providing such a panoramic view, we hope to generate more interest on the studies of Malays in Australia, especially the immigrants from Singapore that are rapidly increasing in numbers in the last three decades.

To demonstrate our arguments, we have structured this article in three parts. The first part discusses trade and inter-cultural mixing between the aborigines and the Macassans (1700s to 1906) as well as Malays active involvement in the pearling industry under colonial rule (1870s to 1949). We analyse the establishment of contact, marriage and economic relations between Macassan seafarers and the indigenous population along the northern coast of Australia as well as the roles of indentured Malay workers who were sent and/or travelled to Australia to work in the lucrative pearling industry. The second part examines the social contracts with white creole rulers and community-formation on the islands which later on became part of contemporary Australia (1826 until the 1980s). The creation of a Malay communities on Cocos-Keeling and Christmas Islands followed by their migration to Western Australia is covered here.⁶ Finally, we explore the localisation of Malays in multicultural Australia (1950s until the present day). The mass migration of Malays in cities such as Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane was made possible the decline of the White Australia policy in the second half of the 20th century and the celebration of multiculturalism by the state.

The Macassan Trepangers and Malays in the Pearling Industry

Researchers generally agree that the economic interactions and inter-cultural mixing between Macassan seafarers and the indigenous Australian population along the northern coast of the country had already flourished by the time the First Fleet arrived in New South Wales in 1788.⁷ Like many colonial labels that over-simplify ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities, the term ‘Macassan’ had been used (and is still used in academic studies) to refer to the seafarers originating from the port of Makassar in southern Sulawesi. These seafarers made annual trips to the northern coast of present-day Australia, primarily for the collection of *trepang* (sea cucumbers), or *teripang* in Indonesian language. They included ethnic Makassarese, Bugis, Butonese and Bajau peoples who were described by the European merchants then as “intelligent traders.”⁸ The Macassans would leave the port of Makassar in December in large wooden sailing vessels known as praus (from ‘perahu’ in Malay and Bahasa Indonesia). They travelled with the northwest monsoon winds to reach the northern coasts of the Kimberley and Arnhem Land, or “Kayu Jawa” and “Marege” respectively, as the Macassans described these places. While waiting for the reverse southeast monsoon winds to bring them back to Makassar in three to four months, Macassans caught, cooked and dried the

6 Different terms have been used to identify the islands throughout history, including ‘Cocos-Keeling Islands’ and ‘Cocos (Keeling) Islands’. For the sake of consistency, we use ‘Cocos Keeling Islands’ throughout this article unless used otherwise in citation.

7 Marshall Clark and Sally K. May, “Understanding the Macassans: A Regional Approach”, in *Macassan History and Heritage: Journeys, Encounters and Influences*, (eds.) Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), 2–3.

8 “Transaction of the Statistical Society,” *South Australian Register (Adelaide)*, 1 January 1842.

trepong. These were done with the assistance of the indigenous population. The trepong, along with other valuable trade commodities such as pearl shells, were brought back to Makassar and sold to Chinese traders. Trepong was highly sought after in southern China for its medicinal and aphrodisiacal qualities.⁹

As a result of these annual trips, the Macassans developed not only economic but social ties with the indigenous population. The latter's ability to communicate with the Macassans in Malay resulted to long-term relationships between Macassan trepongers and indigenous women at Kayu Jawa and Marege'. Aboriginal sojourners also travelled with the Macassans on their return trip, some staying there for seasons while others settled there and established families with Macassan women. This sustained economic exchanges and inter-cultural mixing and between the Macassans and the indigenous communities along the northern coast had significant impact on the latter's language and culture.¹⁰ Regina Ganter illustrates the harmonious acculturation of Macassan language and culture into the Yolngu people in Northern Australia. She describes how Yolngu languages are tinted with Malay, Bugis and Makassarese inflections and illustrates the extent of Islamic influences in Yolngu culture and religion. The harmonious acculturation and interaction between the Yolngu and the Macassans would likely have resulted in the adoption of Islam by the Yolngu, if not for the British that disrupted the process.¹¹

The Macassan trade was evidently significant to the British who were looking for new trading opportunities and means to strengthen their presence in the east. In 1823, a committee of merchants advised the Colonial Office to establish commercial relations with the Macassan trepongers to the north of Australia. From the 1820s, stations were set up by the British at Fort Dundas on Melville Island, Fort Wellington in Raffles Bay and later at Port Essington based on recommendation of European ship owners.¹² All failed for numerous reasons and were abandoned. Nonetheless, the British maintained their presence in the region. Deals that were struck between the British and Malay merchants enabled the employment of Malays from different parts of Southeast Asia in view of their ability to communicate with both the seafaring Macassan traders as well as the local indigenous population from widely dispersed tribes. The British acknowledged the strategic advantage of working closely with the Malays in their long-term plan of establishing colonies and dominate trade along the northern coast of Australia.¹³

9 "Exploration of Australia", *The North Australian* (Brisbane), 15 November, 1964.

10 George Windsor Earl, *The Eastern seas: or, Voyages and adventures in the Indian Archipelago, in 1832-33-34, comprising a tour of the island of Java – visits to Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Siam &c.; also an account of the present state of Singapore with observations on the commercial resources of the Archipelago* (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1837), 442–446.

11 Regina Ganter, "Histories with Traction: Macassan Contact in the Framework of Muslim Australian History," in *Macassan History and Heritage*, 60.

12 "Shipping Intelligence," *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (New South Wales), 20 June 1827.

13 *Ibid.*

From 1863, the northern coast and its waters came under the authority of the colonial government of South Australia. Very little interest was shown by this government in trading with the Macassans. The Macassan trepang industry declined from the 1880s onwards due to the taxes and charges imposed on visiting Macassan trepangers, as the government sought to evict them from the northern coast. With the advent of the White Australia policy via the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, antagonism escalated and finally the government decided to put an end to the Macassan trepang industry.¹⁴ A prohibition was legislated in 1906, bringing an end to a once thriving trade.

The decline of the Macassan trepang industry along the northern coast of Australia coincided with the beginning of the lucrative pearling industry (or sometimes referred to as the pearl-shell industry). The industry was established in three locations from the 1870s, namely in Broome (Western Australia), Darwin (Northern Territory) and along the Torres Strait (Queensland) during this era. Before we dive further, it is important to discuss briefly the understanding and usage of the term ‘Malay’ during this period of time. Anna Shnukal writes: “The word ‘Malay’ in 19th-century northern Australia was an omnibus geographical and racial term, which obscures rather than clarifies geographical origins. It does not readily translate into contemporary geopolitical realities.”¹⁵ Interestingly, the term Malay then referred to an individual’s geographical origin, encompassing ethnic groups originating from present-day Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. In the Torres Strait for example, the Malays who settled on its various islands were those from Borneo, Java, Makassar and Singapore while Malays in Darwin originated from Maluku, Timor and Sulawesi in addition to Java and Singapore.

At other times, separate labels were used to differentiate and highlight the ethnic origins of these migrants. In Broome and in Darwin, ‘Ambonese’ and ‘Koepangers’ were differentiated from the Malays. In addition, the derogatory term ‘Koepang boy(s)’ was used on the Koepangers – individuals who came mostly from the islands off Kupang in West Timor. The use of the term ‘boy’, usually reserved for Aboriginal workers was never applied on the Malays. Even so, these communities were all referred to by colonial newspapers in Australia in the 1920s as a “color problem.”¹⁶ Martinez, in turn, argues that a racial hierarchy which reflected British colonialist prejudices existed in these places, one that “distinguished between the Malays and the supposedly more ‘primitive’ indigenous populations of the outer islands.”¹⁷ Riots in Broome in 1914 and 1920 further exposed this differentiation and relative inequality faced by the Ambonese and Koepangers, who were frequently subjected to bullying and cruelty at the hands of

14 See: Immigration Restriction Act (Cth), <https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/scan-sid-144.html>

15 Anna Shnukal, “They Don’t Know What Went on Underneath: Three Little-known Filipino/Malay Communities of Torres Strait”, in *Navigating Boundaries: The Asian Diaspora in Torres Strait*, (eds.) Anna Shnukal, Guy Ramsay and Yuriko Nagata (Canberra: ANU E View, 2004), 82.

16 “The Nor’-West Color Problem”, *The Australian* (Perth), 1 April 1921.

17 Julia Martinez, “The Malay Community in Pre-war Darwin”, *Queensland Review* 6, no. 2 (1999): 50.

the Japanese within this highly stratified social system. In 1914, the Malays were spared when a group of Koepangers were attacked by hundreds of Japanese wielding axes, revolvers and clubs.¹⁸ In 1920, clashes broke out between the Malays and Ambonese, with the cause of the disturbance allegedly being the refusal of the Malays to collaborate with the Ambonese against the Japanese.¹⁹

Bearing in mind these nuances in the use of the term 'Malay', it is noteworthy that the earliest instance of Malay recruitment for the pearling industry was in 1870. Individuals from the islands of Alor and Solor in the Lesser Sundanese Archipelago (*Kepulauan Sunda Kecil*) were recruited to work in Western Australia for a period of twelve months. This venture proved successful and marked the beginning of the trend of labour recruitment in the Malay Archipelago that lasted nearly a century.²⁰ The rapid increase of the Malay population within pearling stations and towns along the northern coast of Australia was the direct result of systematic mass indenture, where recruits signed an agreement for a fixed term with a flat rate of pay. The pearling industry offered the promise of wealth that was often beyond the reach of these indentured recruits, especially among those from the rural areas who lived in poverty. In the 1880s, an indentured recruit could hope to earn at least £200 annually as divers and labourers – an amount that could allow them to live in relative prosperity on their return. The high salaries which pearl divers enjoyed also came with high risks.²¹

Indeed, the harsh reality of the industry was far from its promise of prosperity. Pearling crews lived on board their vessels for about eight to nine months of the year. Conditions on board these vessels were cramped and unsanitary. The crew were often malnourished and subjected to diseases like beri-beri which also infected the indigenous population that they came into contact with.²² During the cyclone season from December to March, the vessels were laid up along the coast for maintenance and the men lived ashore in crowded camps and boarding houses. The pearling industry was also notorious for its high rates of mortality where hundreds of indentured personnel succumbed to diseases or perished in tropical cyclones. The 'Big Blow of 1887' which came unexpectedly in April of that year caught everyone off guard and as a result over a hundred divers at sea, many of whom were Malays.²³ Additionally, hundreds of others were permanently incapacitated as a result of diving mishaps. There were also numerous cases where these indentured personnel were left stranded in pearling towns by employers who refused to return them home.²⁴

18 "Serious Rioting at Broome", *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 13 December 1914.

19 "The Broome Riots", *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* (Darwin), 28 December 1920.

20 Peter J. McGann, "'Malays' as Indentured Labour: Western Australia 1867–1900", *Papers in Labour History* 5 (1990): 36–37.

21 "A Pearl Fishing Catastrophe", *South Australian Register* (Adelaide), 29 April 1887.

22 "Annual Report on British New Guinea for the year ending 30th June 1905" (Government of Commonwealth of Australia: State of Victoria, 1905), 39.

23 Christopher W. Coppin, "A North-West Tragedy: The Big Blow of 1887", *Early Days: The Journal of the Western Australian Historical Society*, 3, no. 9 (1947), 37–40.

24 Peter J. McGann, "'Malays' as Indentured Labour", 52.

By the time the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901, there was a significant population of Malays in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Torres Strait—along the northern coast where pearl beds were found. During this period of time, there was a ‘Malaytown’ in Broome and Darwin as well as on Thursday Island and Badu (Mulgrave Island). These communal enclaves acted as sites where Malays of various origins and the aborigines intermixed with one another.²⁵ Despite the advent of the White Australia policy and the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, the arrival of indentured Malays into Australia continued unabated as the pearling industry was exempted from the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. With this exemption, a large number of indentured Malays worked in the pearling industries of Broome, Darwin and Thursday Island in the early 20th century. A newspaper editorial wrote any visitors to Broome would encounter “every day Malays with poles like the Chinamen use to carry their baskets and boxes with a fish or two each end, their tails keeping out of the sand. This is simply a pearling station.”²⁶ Martinez estimates that there were some 1,000 Malays employed on average each year in Australia within the first decade of Australia’s formation.²⁷

Even as the numbers fluctuated as a result of the demands and supply of Malay indentured labour, 1,161 Malays were enumerated in the first Census of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911 (Table 1). They formed about 2.75% of the total non-European migrant population of about 42,000. It is noteworthy that the migration of Malay individuals to Australia during this period was greatly gendered. Of the 1,161 Malay individuals enumerated in the 1911 census, only 90—a modest 7.75% of the Malay population—were females. Due to the small number of Malay female population, many of these pearling labourers had established marital ties with indigenous population, as had the Macassans in the past. A select few entered into relationships with white women, giving rise to what was later called as “blue-eyed Malays.”²⁸

Table 1: Population of Malays in the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911, enumerated according to gender and caste.

Males		Females		Persons (Total)	
Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste
1,033	38	44	46	1,077	84
1,071		90		1,161	

25 Peta Stephenson, “Keeping it in the Family: Partnerships Between Indigenous and Muslim Communities in Australia”, *Aboriginal History* 33 (2009): 106–107.

26 “Pearling at Broome”, *The Register* (Adelaide), 7 May 1908.

27 Julia Martinez, “Indonesians Challenging White Australia: ‘Koepangers’ in the North Australian Pearl-shell Industry, 1870s to 1960s”, *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no. 117 (2012): 236.

28 “Blue-eyed Malays”, *The Register* (Adelaide), 26 January 1926.

One significant finding of this census is that a large majority of Malays were resident in the state of Queensland (Table 2). A sum total of 394 persons, Queensland had the second-largest population of Malays in Australia after Western Australia. A third of Queensland’s Malay population (121 individuals) were born intrastate and at least 152 of its population were recorded to have resided in Australia for at least twenty years – evidence of the long history of Malays in the north eastern state. Queensland had the largest population of ‘half-caste’ Malays (individuals from mixed Malay and indigenous ancestry) in all of Australia with 56. The presence of a relatively high number of ‘half-caste’ Malay males and females in Queensland signify the close ties between its Malay migrants and indigenous population.

Table 2: Population of Malay persons in the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911, enumerated according to state/territory and caste. “FB” denotes “Full-Blood” and “HC” denotes “Half-Caste”

NSW		Victoria		Queensland		South Australia		Western Australia		Northern Territory	
FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC	FB	HC
29	11	5	13	338	56	2	2	675	2	28	0

The majority of Malays in Western Australia were considered ‘migratory’. In the 1921 census, it was indicated that ‘migratory’ individuals were those who were working aboard ships and trains. In the Torres Strait, a large number of Malay migrants who had completed their period of indenture chose to remain, marry local women and settle down permanently. Shnukal cites seven marriages between Malay men and women from Badu and Mabuag by 1898.²⁹ Malays and other non-whites who were already resident in Australia by 1901 were legally entitled to remain in the country. A similar community, dubbed the ‘Malay Village’ was established from 1939 on Port Lihou. Given that many Malay men had married local women, these two communities on Badu and Port Lihou naturally had strong social and kinship ties with the local indigenous population. However, both these communities did not last more than one generation. In both cases, they were forced to relocate to Thursday Island as a result of external circumstances beyond their control. Along with the aborigines, Europeans, South Sea Islanders, Papuans, Chinese, Filipinos and Japanese, these Malays developed a new cosmopolitan identity known as “Thursday Islanders.”³⁰

Numerically, the population of Malays remained relatively unchanged in the first half of the 20th century (Table 3). Nonetheless, there was a sharp increase

29 Anna Shnukal, “They Don’t Know What Went on Underneath”, 104.
30 “Meeting Place of Nations: Cosmopolitan Thursday Island”, *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 13 January 1935.

between the number of full-blood and half-caste Malays between 1933 and 1947. In the span of fourteen years, the number of local born Malays of indigenous descent more than doubled. Within the same time, the number of indentured Malays dropped sharply, reflecting the decline of the pearling industry by the 1940s, especially after World War II.

Table 3: Population of Malays in the Commonwealth of Australia in from 1911 to 1947, enumerated according to caste.

1911		1921		1933		1947	
Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste	Full-blood	Half-caste
1,077	84	1,087	90	969	160	580	394
1,161		1,177		1,129		974	

After World War II, the pearling industry was slowly re-established, but in a different form with the introduction of pearl farming and the cultured pearl with expertise from Japan. The importation of indentured labourers from Asian countries ceased from the early 1950s, years before Australia changed its citizenship requirements and began to dismantle its White Australia policy.³¹ Many of the Malays who worked in the pearl farms were Muslims who partly belonged to the early batch of indentured migrants. Despite their numbers, the Malays of Broome, Darwin and Torres Strait Islands, however, did not leave a lasting Islamic legacy – at least one in which present-day Muslim migrants to Australia can identify with.

Stephenson describes how the descendants of Malay migrants in the Torres Strait are “extremely proud of their Muslim heritage, but are not interested in taking on (accepting) Islam.”³² According to her research, there were only two practising Muslims on Thursday Island and they have since relocated to Malaysia. The cultural practices of Thursday Islanders called *ailan pasin* (‘island custom’), are a hybrid of indigenous and Asian practices, including that of their Muslim Malay ancestors. While Thursday Islanders follow the Muslim practice of wrapping the deceased in white shrouds before burial, they add the unique practice of tying any excess shroud on to their wrists until they fall off in a few months. The death is then commemorated after a hundred days with a feast – a practice though contested, is not completely unfamiliar with Muslims in the Malay Archipelago. However this feast is followed by the unveiling of the deceased

31 “Indenture labor to cease”, *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 20 July 1950.

32 Peta Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming: Indigenous Muslims in Australia*, 96.

tombstone.³³ Additionally, no mosque was ever built in the Torres Strait. In Broome, only one mosque had ever been built by the Malays in the 1924. It was destroyed during World War II and never restored.³⁴ There was similarly no mosque in Darwin until 1979 via the efforts of the Islamic Society Darwin.³⁵

Social Contracts and Community-formation on the islands

The Malays on the Cocos Keeling Islands can be considered Australia's oldest Muslim community from Southeast Asia. As of 2016, there are 400 Malays living on the Cocos Keeling Islands.³⁶ What makes the Malays of the Cocos Keeling Islands unique is that it is a diaspora in itself. Substantial number of Malays from the Cocos Keeling Islands settled in Western Australia, Christmas Island and Sabah (on East Malaysia). Some of these individuals found their way to Singapore and West Malaysia. We explore the history of the Cocos Malays and its diaspora while touching on other Malay-Muslim communities on Christmas Island and Western Australia.

The history of the Cocos Malays can hardly be discussed without mention of the Clunies-Ross family who owned the Cocos Keeling Islands and were recognised by the British as “kings” and “absolute rulers” over the Cocos Malays for five generations.³⁷ The first of them was John Clunies-Ross, who had arrived on the islands in February 1827 with his family and men. They built a settlement on Selma Island (later renamed Home Island), where the Cocos Malays have lived since. The arrival of John Clunies-Ross on the islands was preceded by Alexander Hare some months prior. John Clunies-Ross' relationship with Alexander Hare stretched back to 1813 when Clunies-Ross was hired as master of *Olivia*, a brig (sailing vessel) owned by Alexander Hare. Hare plays a significant role in Cocos Malay history, being the original owner of the people who the Cocos Malays descended from.³⁸

John Clunies-Ross and Alexander Hare soon occupied the Cocos Keeling Islands jointly and used the islands as a depot for spice and pepper before shipping it on to Europe. Hare's original intention was apparently to settle his people in the Cocos Keeling islands, free from interference by the outside world, while he pursued compensation

33 Anna Shnukal, “Confluence: Asian Cultural Contribution to Ailan Pasin”, in *Navigating Boundaries: The Asian Diaspora in Torres Strait*, (ed.) Anna Shnukal, Guy Ramsay and Yuriko Nagata (Canberra: ANU E View, 2004), 256.

34 “First Mosque”, *Mirror* (Perth), 16 August 1924. See also: Qassim Saad, “Perth Mosque: A Cultural Structure Strengthening Collective Identity”, *Garland*, Mar. 12, 2018, <https://garlandmag.com/article/perth-mosque>.

35 Mohammad Nurul Huq, *A brief history of the Islamic society of Darwin* (Mohammad Nurul Huq: Anula, Australia, 2009)

36 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), “Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity”.

37 “A Scottish King: Absolute Ruler of Cocos-Keeling Islands”, *The Ballarat Star* (Victoria), 31 March 1989.

38 See C.A. Gibson-Hill, “Notes on the Cocos-Keeling Islands”, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20, no. 2 (1947): 147.

from the Dutch authorities and reversal of the ban on living in the Netherlands East Indies. Quarrels between the two became common, eventually resulting in Hare leaving the islands within the next few years. Upon Alexander Hare's death in Bencoolen in 1834, Clunies-Ross consolidating his authority over the island and its inhabitants.³⁹

It is generally known that the Cocos Malays descended from Hare's entourage, which by 1901 had come close to 700 men, women and children.⁴⁰ The women seemed to have originated from places within the Malay Archipelago that included Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Java, Bali, Sumbawa and Timor as well as places so distant as the Cape, India and China. The Cocos Malays would have also likely descended from the male crew of *Borneo* and *Hippomenes* – the vessels owned by Hare and Clunies-Ross. These men, perhaps numbering about twenty, reportedly originated from Java and Sumatra. Even before Hare's withdrawal from the islands, the women who belonged to Hare had deserted him to join these men in Clunies-Ross' settlement. Clunies-Ross had refused to send them back and encouraged the men to take these women as wives through what was taken to be a binding marriage service.⁴¹ Amidst differences in ethnic and regional origins, the early Cocos Malays developed a unified communal identity as 'Orang Cape' (the Cape People).⁴² It is interesting that they had chosen to identify themselves as people of the Cape Colony instead of the Malay Archipelago where almost all of them had originated from.

Although Cocos Malays have attempted to take control of their lives through demands and grievances expressed against the Clunies-Ross family, their relationship between the white creole rulers was generally peaceful throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 'social contract' put in place between the Cocos Malays and the Clunies-Ross family stemmed from the agreement that the white creole rulers would govern the islands with "careful and systematic principles."⁴³ Opium was banned on the islands and gambling limited to the Batamese coolies only on special occasions. All married couples were provided with houses. Malays were free to practice their faith in as long as they abide the laws enacted by the white creole rulers.⁴⁴

The Clunies-Ross maintained their authority over the Cocos Malays through a closed economy. The islands had a unique currency not recognised anywhere else which were coins made from plastic ivory. Up until 1900, the economy of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands was wholly supported by exports of high-quality copra to Singapore

39 Obituary of Alexander Hare is found in "Singapore News", *Sydney Herald* (New South Wales), 21 July, 1834.

40 "The Cocos Islands", *The Brisbane Courier* (Queensland), 19 February 1901.

41 C.A. Gibson-Hill, "Notes on the Cocos-Keeling Islands", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20, no. 2 (1947): 149.

42 John G. Hunt, "The Revenge of the Bantamese: Factors for Change in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands" (Master's thesis, Australian National University, 1989), 6.

43 "The Cocos-Keeling Islands", *The Queenlander* (Brisbane), 19 March 1898.

44 "Cocos Island: The King is Dead – Long Live the King", *Golburn Evening Post* (New South Wales), 10 July 1945.

and Europe. The Cocos Malays provided the labour required for the island's copra production. Males above the age of 14 were required to work on the plantations and workshops on the island. The Cocos Malays were paid wages in a currency unique to the islands – initially sheepskin, and later plastic coins. This currency could only be used to purchase supplies from the local shop (*toko*) run by the Clunies-Ross family themselves. The Cocos Malays could not move about from one island to another within Cocos Keeling Islands without prior permission of their rulers, also known as *Tuan*. Emigration was an irreversible choice – an islander who decided to leave could no longer return to the community. The unique currency with which the Cocos Malays were paid with also made it impossible for the islanders to trade with passing vessels. Interestingly, for over a century, Cocos Malays generally accepted such socio-economic arrangements and legal codes which they saw as congruent to their desires of wanting a simple and tranquil way of life. Undeniably, crime on the islands was almost non-existent.⁴⁵

The social contract was further strengthened through the intermarriages of the Cocos Malays and the Clunies-Ross family since the days of the first ruler of the island. Additionally, isolation from the outside world had caused the culture and identity of the Cocos Malays to coalesce with those of their rulers – resulting in a highly Europeanised Malay community. The Cocos Malays reportedly had their meals on tables and using cutlery, instead of their hands; the men wore trousers instead of the 'sarong'; and the ladies did not cover their head and were more sociable with strangers compared to their counterparts in parts of the Malay world. Additionally, polygamy was unknown among the Cocos Malays, who by early twentieth century had adopted English marriage customs. Newborn babies were given European names by members of the Clunies-Ross family, such as Atlas, Daniel, Esther, Gatling, Kitchener and Wallace.⁴⁶

The white creole rulers also employed indentured labourers from Java, known to the Cocos Malays as 'Orang Banten' and to the Europeans as the 'Bantamese.' Despite living as a separate community in their own village with their own leaders and Imam, they soon inter-married with the local islanders. They were credited for bringing *Wayang Kulit* (Javanese puppet performance) to the Cocos Keeling Islands and into the Cocos Malay culture. Within a generation, Bantamese influences worked their way into Cocos Malay culture and the European influence was gradually eroded. When John Sidney Clunies-Ross took over the rule of the Cocos Keeling Islands in 1910, he consolidated both communities into a single village after repatriating the Bantamese who had chosen not to reside permanently on the islands. The islanders' identities as 'Orang Banten' and 'Orang Cape' were gradually subsumed under a new rubric known as 'Orang Pulau' (Islanders). Influenced by the social and religious practices of the Bantamese, Cocos Malays recovered their traditional values and customs.⁴⁷

45 "White 'King' returns to nearby 'Paradise'", *The West Australian* (Perth), 24 January 1950.

46 "A Malay Kingdom ruled by a Scotchman", *The Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (New South Wales), 1 November 1907.

47 John Hunt, "The Revenge of the Bantamese", 26.

By 1931, just after a century of their arrival on the Cocos Keeling Islands, the Cocos Malay population had risen to 1,082. Only a few dozens had ever left the islands, mostly to Singapore and Christmas Island. The emigration of Cocos Malays out of these islands illustrates their agency in determining their own socio-political destiny. It is especially remarkable bearing in mind the kind of challenges they would have faced as immigrants in new lands after a lifetime of isolation. Mass emigration of Cocos Malays occurred in four waves:

- (1) to Singapore between 1936 and 1941,
- (2) to Singapore, Christmas Island and Borneo (Sabah) between 1948 and 1951,
- (3) to Christmas Island between 1958 and 1959,
- (4) to Kattanning and other towns in Western Australia from 1975.

With the mass emigration of Cocos Malays, the social contract which the Clunies-Ross dynasty maintained for over a century began to unravel. The growing poverty in the 1930s amidst the global economic depression, the declining price of copra and overpopulation meant that Cocos Malays had to move to other neighbouring islands and states in search of better lives.⁴⁸ By the 1950s, more than a thousand Cocos Malays left to North Borneo (Sabah).⁴⁹ Cocos Malays provided labour to develop the plantations owned by the Colonial Development Corporation amidst a desperate shortage of labour. After the Cocos Malays arrived in North Borneo, the population distributed – mainly at Tawau, but also to Lahad Datu, Kunak and Sandakan.⁵⁰

The rest of the population migrated to Singapore and Christmas Island. By August 1951, there was a sizeable population of Cocos Malays in Christmas Island with twenty-four families (comprising of 124 persons).⁵¹ Between 1958 and 1959, amidst another period of unhappiness and uncertainty regarding their future, over a hundred Cocos Malays requested to leave the Cocos Keeling Islands in order to join their relatives on Christmas Island. The latter offered prospects of working for real money, educational opportunities for their children and the freedom to travel to Singapore and Sabah. Many of these Cocos Malays had by then been granted Australian citizenship.⁵²

In the early 1970s, the future of the phosphate mine on Christmas Island became increasingly uncertain prompting the Australian government to plan the resettlement of Christmas Islanders to mainland Australia. By then, there were about 500 Cocos Malays on Christmas Island. In 1973, the first few families from Christmas Island

48 “Excess Population In Cocos Island” *Malaya Tribune*, 28 April 1948.

49 “1,000 people want to leave when island rule changes”, *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 27 June 1951.

50 Noor Aziah Mohd. Ariffin and Nurul Ain Osri, “The Evolution of Space Organisation in Cocos Malays’ Dwellings in Tawau, Sabah,” *Advanced Science Letters* 23 (2017): 6231–6236.

51 John Hunt, “The Revenge of the Bantamese”, 119.

52 “These 350 Malays will become Australians,” *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 27 January 1955.

arrived in the Western Australian town of Katanning, where the local abattoir sought to expand into the Muslim poultry and food market. Demand for Muslim workers at the export abattoir attracted further families from both Christmas Island and Cocos Islands.⁵³ Those already settled in Katanning continued to share positive news about life there while assisting their relatives by securing jobs and accommodation before they migrated. On the Cocos Keeling Islands, life for the Cocos Malays became increasingly uncertain as John Cecil Clunies-Ross tried to hold on to the islands under intense pressure by the Australian Government. On the other hand, approximately 300 Cocos Malays from Christmas Island and Cocos Islands had migrated to Katanning by 1979. In the years that followed, a number of the Cocos Malays in Katanning migrated to other areas of Western Australia, with Bunbury and Perth popular destinations as they offered better job opportunities. Newer migrants also settled in Geraldton and Port Hedland.⁵⁴ In 1984, under the supervision of the United Nations, the population of Cocos Malays voted to integrate with Australia.⁵⁵

Parallel to the migration of Cocos Malays to Western Australia, a large number of Malays from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia migrated to Perth in the 1980s. Retirees from Christmas Island were reportedly also offered retirement packages at the age of 55 to live in Perth. Nonetheless, they form separate communities and do not interact with the Cocos Malays in Western Australia. Like the Malays who settled in Melbourne and Sydney, they are part of the recent wave of Malay migration to Australia. In 2016, there are at least 10,753 Malays in Western Australia, the second largest population of Malays in Australia after Victoria.⁵⁶

Malays in Multicultural Australia

In the years after World War II, public sentiment towards the White Australia policy began to change. Contributing to this sentiment was the government's decision in the late 1940s to repatriate a number of Malay men who were married to Australian women – some of whom already had children born in Australia.⁵⁷ A large number of non-Europeans including between 50 and 100 Malays had been admitted temporarily during the war, either as refugees or as members of the Allied Forces.⁵⁸ Others who

53 Simon Lyas *et al.*, “A Case Study of Katanning: Innovation for Cultural Dividend,” in *Regional Advantage and Innovation*, (eds.) S. Kinnear *et al.* (Heidelberg, Germany: Physica-Verlag, 2013): 222.

54 Monika Winarnita and Nicholas Herriman, “Caring and Family: Marriage Migration to the Malay Muslim community of Home Island (Cocos Keeling Islands),” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no.118 (2012): 377.

55 “Cocos (Keeling) Islands Annual Report, 1983/1984, Parliament Paper No. 124 of 1985” (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1984), 17.

56 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), “Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity”.

57 “Malay Seamen’s Wives”, *The West Australian* (Perth), 22 January, 1948.

58 A. Henderson, “Malays (Australia)”, Hansard, UK Parliament, Feb. 5, 1948, [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1948-02-05/debates/788a2077-e01a-43a4-a9b5-71e1e90e1266/Malays\(Australia\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1948-02-05/debates/788a2077-e01a-43a4-a9b5-71e1e90e1266/Malays(Australia))

were repatriated had been in the country even longer as indentured labourers. The plight of these men and their families evoked significant public sympathy and indignation within Australia and in Malaya.⁵⁹

From the 1950s, Australia began to actively open its doors to immigrants. In 1951, the Colombo Plan was launched “to strengthen relationships within Asia and the Pacific and promote partnerships of mutual help towards social and economic development in the member countries.”⁶⁰ Australia and Malaya were among the original eight signatories. With this, large scale migration of Malays to Australia began anew in the post-war years. The Colombo plan brought nearly 17,000 South Asian and South East Asian students to Australia, and the majority of these were Malaysians. Of these students, some married locally and later sponsored their parents or siblings to settle in Australia.⁶¹ Among the Malaysians, many were Muslims (and presumably mostly Malay) from middle-class families who were intelligent and proficient in English.⁶²

In 1966, the Australian government introduced measures which were the first major steps towards ending the long-held White Australia policy. Seven years later, the government removed race as a factor in Australia’s immigration policies.⁶³ With this, the White Australia policy which had been in place for more than seven decades was definitively renounced, establishing a policy of multiculturalism in which the Malays would become part of. The majority of Malays who migrated to Australia during this period henceforth settled in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, in the territories of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland respectively, with a smaller number migrating to western and southern parts of Australia such as Perth and Adelaide.

Asmah Haji Omar and Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri have researched and written extensively on Australian Malays in Victoria, New South Wales and Brisbane. According to Asmah, the Malays in Sydney and Melbourne originate from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The earliest migrants who settled there were the students from these countries who had studied in Australia during the 1950s. Malaysian Malays have migrated in large numbers since the 1950s, Indonesian Malays since the 1960s and Singapore Malays since the 1970s. As of 2016, there are at least 14,268 Malays in Victoria, 10,381 Malays in New South Wales and another 6,098 in Queensland.⁶⁴

59 “Protest Over Malay Seamen”, *The Herald* (Melbourne), 26 November, 1947 and “Fears to Return to Malaya”, *Smith’s Weekly* (New South Wales), 6 November, 1948.

60 “The Colombo Plan”, Destination: Australia – Sharing our Post-war Migrant Stories, National Archives of Australia, accessed Mar. 25, 2020, <https://www.destinationaustralia.gov.au/stories/work-play/colombo-plan>.

61 Christopher Ziguras and Siew-Fang Law, “Recruiting International Students as Skilled Migrants: The Global ‘Skills Race’ as Viewed from Australia and Malaysia”, *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 4 no. 1 (2006): 65.

62 Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri, *Malay in Victoria: Past, Present and Future* (Saarbrücken, Germany: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2011), 15.

63 “Immigration Policy: Labor Outlaws Racial Bias”, *The Canberra Times* (Australian Capital Territory), 21 June 1971.

64 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), “Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity”.

Table 4: Population of Malays in the various states of Australia as accounted for in the 2016 Census.

NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
10,381	14,268	6,098	2,448	10,753	412	425	919

One of the major factors for migration mentioned is the enhanced education opportunities that Australia offers. Better quality education, leading to good domestic and international job prospects have been the main reasons that motivate Malaysian students to study in Australia.⁶⁵

For Singaporeans, Australia provided a good educational system and better educational opportunities with significantly less competition, pressure and stress than in Singapore.⁶⁶ Another major factor for emigration is the promise of job opportunities and social freedom in light of perceived political and social discrimination in their home countries that tend to benefit certain sections of society. Singapore Malays who migrated to Australia in the late 1980s reportedly were unable to secure jobs which were commensurate with their qualifications. Many felt that their careers were stagnating as a result of being discriminated against by their employers.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Sullivan and Gunasekaran have noted that (as of the early 1990s at least) the Malays in Singapore may not have the social capital to migrate easily.⁶⁸ Regardless, since then (a period of nearly three decades), there are at least 3,753 Singapore Malay-Muslims settled in Australia, suggesting that Malays from Singapore have significantly improved their educational attainment and tapped on pre-existing social networks in Australia resulting in more chain migration in recent times.⁶⁹

In terms identity, it has been observed that the Malays in Melbourne socialise in across various communities, albeit with some overlaps. Malay and Islamic associations in Victoria and New South Wales serve to bring together people of similar background and origin. There are no less than four such organisations in Victoria and three in

65 I Lin Sin, "Malaysian Students in Australia: The Pursuit of Upward Mobility", *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 15, No. 2 (2006): 261.

66 See Gerard Sullivan and S. Gunasekaran, *Motivations of Migrants from Singapore to Australia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994).

67 Asmah Haji Omar, *The Malays in Australia*, 115.

68 Gerard Sullivan and S. Gunasekaran, *Motivations of Migrants from Singapore to Australia*, 73.

69 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), "Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016 – Cultural Diversity". The data presented covers "Country of birth by religious affiliation". 3,753 does not include Australian born Malays with ancestral origins from Singapore.

New South Wales.⁷⁰ Social gatherings and activities organised by these associations strengthen the bonds between members and provide a strong sense of “Malay” identity and belonging to these migrants and their families. They also provide a platform for newer migrants to familiarise themselves and settle down more easily. At the same time, these organisations ensure the preservation of religious and cultural knowledge, practice and values. Cultural shows are organised for the youths to inculcate a strong sense of identity and belonging in a diasporic community. Through these associations, the Malays in Victoria and New South Wales have been able to meet the religious needs of the community, such as obtaining permits to buy land and build mosques and purchasing land to bury the deceased.⁷¹

Nonetheless, in preserving the language and culture while practising Islam, Malays in Australia are believed to have little or no conflict in being Australian. Undoubtedly, this is due to their positive outlook in life as much as Australia’s multicultural makeup and policies that embrace it. At the end of his short exposition of Malays in Victoria, Zaharuddin declares:

There is nothing wrong in being proud of [being] Malay, there is nothing wrong in being Australian and there is nothing wrong in being proud to be Malay Australian. We are Malay Australians and we should be proud of it.⁷²

Conclusion

This article has brought to the fore the four driving forces that led to the making of a localised Malay communities in Australia various points of history and from various points of origin namely, economic exchanges, inter-cultural mixing, formation of social contracts, and open migration policies. Broadly speaking, the different waves of Malay migration into Australia that we have discussed above can be further categorised into two periods – ‘early’ and ‘ongoing’, with the signing of the Colombo Plan in 1951 being the point of reference in history that distinguishes the two. The migration of Malays into Australia during the ‘early’ period was largely economic and for the most part, involved only males. Like the movement of Malays to Ceylon and South Africa during the colonial era, the movement of Malays to Australia during this earlier period was similarly facilitated by the presence of colonial authorities in the Malay Archipelago.

70 The organisations mentioned by Asmah and Zaharuddin include *Persatuan Melayu Victoria* (Malay Association of Victoria), Malay Education & Culture Centre of Australia Inc. (MECCA), *Khairat Melayu Islam Victoria* (Victorian Malay Muslim Welfare Organisation) and *Kampung Utara Melbourne* (North Melbourne Village) for the state of Victoria; Malay Australian Association of New South Wales (MAAN), the Islamic Malay Association of New South Wales (IMAAN) and Ashabul Kahfi Islamic Centre for the state of New South Wales.

71 Asmah Haji Omar, *The Malays in Australia*, 128.

72 Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri, *Malay in Victoria*, 45.

After 1951, Malay migrants began to arrive in large numbers from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore under completely different circumstances than their predecessors. Although it has been more than fifty years since the first Malay students arrived in Australia under the Colombo Plan, we can consider the migration of Malays into Australia after 1951 an 'ongoing' process of chain migration. New migrants are often socialised into pre-existing Malay communities that were formed during the early decades of this period. The division between the two periods of Malay migration to Australia can be seen in the geographical dispersion of their settled communities; Broome and Katanning lie on opposite sides of Western Australia, separated by a distance of about 2,000 kilometres; Darwin and Thursday Island which lie along the northern coast of Australia are no longer migrant destinations, with Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane which lie along the south-eastern coast of Australia the focal point of migration in recent decades. Since the gradual dismantling of White Australia Policy in the years after World War II, Malays have migrated into Australia in large numbers and localised themselves seamlessly within the multicultural community. The arrival of Malay students in the 1950s created a renewed sense of familiarity with Australia, paving the way for the migration of individuals and whole families since. Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, and recently, Brisbane, have since been popular destinations for these migrants. In the 1970s, Malays from the Cocos Keeling and Christmas Islands migrated to Katanning and other towns in Western Australia.

There are two main features that distinguish the recent 'ongoing' migration with migration in the 'early' phase. The first is that Malay migrants in 'ongoing' phase are from a wider cross-section of Malay society – both male and females and across various age groups. They include youths who had studied in Australian universities who have decided to stay on in search of employment opportunities, dependent children and retired parents of married migrants as well as single men and women migrating for various reasons. The second is a strong sense of ethnic identification and the desire to maintain both religious and cultural identity and practices. To this end, the Malays in Australia today have multiple organisations that protect and further their interests and welfare. Studies on Malay communities in the 'early' phase have not only revealed the absence of such communal organisations but the absence of a concerted effort to preserve and pass on the Malay heritage to subsequent generations. In fact, the attitudes and priorities between both sets of migrants seem to be different. The earlier migrants by and large seemed to prioritise economic survival and were lax on the practise of Islam and the maintenance of Malay culture to the extent that their families quickly acculturated into the wider Australian society. Newer migrants in Australia in recent times seem more cognizant of the possibility of subsequent generations assimilating into a Western society without maintaining their Malay identity or Islamic faith. It has been noted that the Malays in Australia today are more conscious about their sense of identity and are more concerned about a possible loss of this identity among future generations.

Another key difference that we found between the different batches of Malay migrants to Australia is the continuous connection to the Malay Archipelago. The earliest migrants who came prior to the late twentieth century were largely isolated

from the Malay Archipelago or that their interactions with families back home were less frequent. In comparison, in the recent decades, the internet, social media and instantaneous communication via mobile devices have made it easy for Malays in Australia today to maintain social and psychological ties with the Malay world – thus making it easy to maintain a sense of belonging to the Malay world and a sense of identity as a Malay. Despite this difference, there is a common theme among the Malay migrants in Australia regardless of the phases that they migrated – that is the shifting notion of ‘home’ and belonging – which were tied largely to changing relations between Malays and local indigenous peoples as well as the policies of colonial and post-colonial states.

After deciding to take on local spouses from indigenous families, the earliest Malay migrants shifted their notion of ‘home’ from their place of origin to their present place of residence. It may even be argued that these migrants occasionally carved out for themselves spaces of their own to call their home, such as the case of the Malays on Thursday Island and the Malaytown of Badu. For their children, ‘home’ never meant any part of the Malay world, suggesting that these Malay migrants were sure of settling permanently in Australia and visualised the future of their children in Australia. There was no ‘myth of return’ associated with many migrant communities, where ‘home’ had always been the place of origin.⁷³ Evidence from research on Malay communities in Australia also show that for any individual, ‘home’ can be multiple locations simultaneously. For the Cocos Malay community in Western Australia, ‘home’ could be any of the following: the Cocos Keeling Islands, Christmas Island or Katanning. A community’s sense of home and belonging could also supersede their sense of ethnicity, as is the case of Thursday Islanders. Nonetheless, more research is required in exploring the notion of home for modern Malay migrants in Australia.

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73 For a discussion on the ‘myth of return’ in the context of immigrant communities, see Marta Bolognani, “The Myth of Return: Dismissal, Survival or Revival? A Bradford Example of Transnationalism as a Political Instrument”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 no. 1 (2007): 59–76.