

HOW DID YOU ARRIVE IN AUSTRALIA? Unlock your family secrets with over 200 million free immigration records

Ancestry.com.au announces free access to immigration records from Thursday 23 August until 11.59PM AEST on Sunday 26 August, 2012

Sydney, Australia, 23 August 2012 – Famous for its convict beginnings, Australia is truly a nation of immigrants. Since October 1945, more than 7.2 million people have migrated to the country[i] bringing the population to 22 million living in Australia today. This weekend, Ancestry.com.au, Australia's largest online family history resource[ii] will be making over 200 million immigration records free to access, starting 12.01AM on Thursday 23 August, until 11.59PM AEST on Sunday 26 August, 2012.

For a limited time Australians can search 275 databases and more than 200 million records ranging from 1606 to 1974 to unlock clues about how their ancestors came to live in Australia. With almost a third (29 per cent)[iii] of Australians not knowing the details of their ancestors' arrival in this country, the open database could assist millions of Aussies to uncover information about how and when their family came to land on these shores.

Today, one in four of Australia's 22 million people were born outside Australia. Of that number it is not surprising to find that people born in the United Kingdom account for the largest group of overseas-born residents, totalling 1.2 million people. The second largest influx of overseas-born residents were born in New Zealand, numbering 544,000 people, followed by China (380,000 people), India (341,000) and Italy (216,000).[iv]

The Immigration records contain information on migrant ancestors who came from around the globe to build a new life in a new land. The records include citizenship and naturalisation records, convict transportation records, border crossing and passports, passenger and crew lists from countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, Europe, United States, Canada and several other countries. This extensive database allows people to track the routes their ancestors took in order to understand how and when they arrived where they did.

Australia has become a melting pot of nationalities, with most residents originally coming from somewhere else. An example of Ancestry members who demonstrate this include:

- Margaret Hardwick from Lismore, NSW's family personifies modern day Australia. Margaret is a mixture of English, Welsh and Irish and married a man who had English, Irish, Scottish, French and Viking blood and is a descendant of a First Fleeter. Their children have broadened the mixture of cultures and she has five great grandchildren with a mix of Chinese, Malay, Spanish, Chilean and Mapuche ancestry.
- Ryan D'Lima from Sydney is a first generation Australian who was born in Mumbai and grew up in Australia. While his ethnicity is part Indian and part Portuguese, his accent and attitude are completely Australian. He loves the Aussie 'never say die' culture and feels that this nation is home to a vibrant multi-cultural approach that embraces every culture and creates a greater understanding towards people.

Brad Argent, Ancestry.com.au Content Director for Australia and New Zealand, comments: "Access to this free collection provides the perfect jumping-off point for anyone wanting to dip their toes into the family history pool.

Australians arrived from all over the world for a multitude of different reasons. This collection offers a wealth of knowledge about our ancestors and perhaps offers insight into why we are the way we are today."

To access the free collections, please visit www.ancestry.com.au/immigration2012

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

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ABOUT ANCESTRY.COM.AU Australia's leading family history website, Ancestry.com.au contains more than one billion records in its Australian and UK collections, including the Australia Birth, Marriage and Death Index, Australian Convict Transportation Registers, Australian Free Settlers, Australian Electoral Rolls, New South Wales SANDS Directories, as well as the most complete online collection of England, Wales and Scotland

Censuses and the England and Wales Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes.

Ancestry.com Inc is the world's largest online family history resource, with approximately 2 million paying subscribers. More than 10 billion records have been added to the site in the past 15 years. Ancestry users have created more than 38 million family trees containing more than four billion profiles.

In addition to its flagship site www.ancestry.com, Ancestry.com offers several localised web sites, including Ancestry.com.au which was launched in May 2006, designed to empower people to discover, preserve and share their family history.

For further stories and updates related to family history research, you can also follow [Ancestry.com](https://www.facebook.com/ancestry) on Facebook and Twitter.

[i] Department of immigration and Citizenship Fact Sheet [ii] comScore, 2011, based on genealogy related websites selected from the Family and Parenting sub-category under the Community category

[iii] The Australians' attitudes towards family history survey was commissioned by Ancestry.com.au and was conducted by The Online Research Unit (ORU) who polled a nationally representative sample of a 1000 people across Australia aged 18 and over, October 2010

[iv] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011