

New research shows that Aussies and Kiwis are closer than we think

Geographically, Australia and New Zealand are thousands of kilometres (2,153.61 km) apart, but as new research shows, the two nations are culturally much closer than we think according to Ancestry.com.au, Australia's number one family history website.[i] The findings emerge as Ancestry.com.au today launches online more than 20 million historical New Zealand records spanning 140 years from 1842 to 1981. The research highlights our close ties to New Zealand, with almost half of Australians surveyed [ii]feeling that they share a strong connection through ancestry, marriage or friendship - perhaps not so surprising given that nearly half of Aussies (43 per cent) have worked or travelled there. It also shows how our increasing closeness is causing cultural confusion, and particularly when it comes to our icons. For example, nine in ten Aussies claim the ANZAC biscuit as our own, while nearly three-quarters (71 per cent) have adopted the Pavlova, which derived from New Zealand. Conversely, over three quarters (76 per cent) believe the phrase 'no wuckers' was created by kiwis. Despite this 'closeness', Australia considers itself a clear winner in certain areas, with just fifth of Aussies considering Kiwis as good at wine-making, sport, and when it comes to simply being friendly. The six major historical collections - the New Zealand Electoral Rolls 1853-1981, Canterbury Provincial Rolls 1868-1874, Jury Lists 1842-1862, Mori Voter and Electoral Rolls 1908 & 1919, Mori Land Claims 1858-1980 and New Zealand Naturalisations 1843-1981, are now available online exclusively on Ancestry.com.au. The collections have been digitised and individual records fully indexed, and depending on the record type, can be searched by a combination of name, gender, district, province and electoral year. One 'Australian' icon we do not claim as our own is Russell Crowe, with three quarters (76 per cent) acknowledging him as a Kiwi. In fact, after shaking the family tree of one of New Zealand's most famous exports, Ancestry.com.au has discovered that Russell's roots extend deep into the collection, with his parents, John and Jocelyn Crowe, listed as Publican and Hotel manager respectively in the 1981 Electoral Rolls for Roskill. Further research into Crowe's family reveals for the first time new information about Crowe's Mori heritage. It appears that Crowe's maternal great-grandmother was of Ngati Rangi, a hapu (sub-tribe) of Ngati Porou, a very proud Mori tribe from the East Coast of the North Island with a long history of warrior activity. An ancestor of the Ngati Porou people is Paikea - more famously known as the 'Whale Rider'. Ancestry.com.au Content Director Brad Argent comments: "This is a big step forward for New Zealand family historians as this is the first time most of these collections have been made available online. "New Zealanders now have the opportunity to explore their past and hopefully uncover new information about their ancestors, who they were and where they came from." New Zealand genealogist and Ancestry.com.au spokesperson Christine Clement comments: "This rich set of historical records will greatly improve record access for New Zealand family history researchers and make it much easier for people to get online and start uncovering their family story." The Anne Brommell Collection is available to UK Heritage Plus and World Heritage members. To find out more about your family's heritage, please visit: www.ancestry.com.au. ENDS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION / INTERVIEWS: Jacquie Potter

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ABOUT ANCESTRY.COM.AU Australia's leading family history website, Ancestry.com.au contains more than 930 million 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.au was launched in May 2006 and belongs to the global network of Ancestry websites (wholly owned by Ancestry.com Operations Inc.), which contains six billion records. To date more than 20 million family trees have been created and 2 billion profiles and 45 million photographs and stories uploaded. (Figures current as of 28 October 2010) The Ancestry global network of family history websites: www.ancestry.com in the US, www.ancestry.co.uk in the UK, www.ancestry.ca in Canada, www.ancestry.com.au in Australia, www.ancestry.dein Germany, www.ancestry.it in Italy, www.ancestry.frin France, www.ancestry.sein Sweden and www.jiapu.com in China.