

## ORIGINS OF IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA, 1787–1914

KARINA PAULINA MARCZUK\*

The origins of immigration to Australia are intrinsically connected to the history of this state, that is its British, colonial heritage. Australia was discovered and then conquered by Great Britain relatively late – the British fleet arrived to the Australian territory for the first time only towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to start a settlement of British convicts. Those first colonists were criminals who came to Australia involuntarily, having been sentenced to expulsion, although later – especially after the discovery of goldfields – many people desired to come to Australia to become rich. This is why the origins of immigration to Australia are very interesting for researchers; a thorough study of this issue may provide the answer to why Australian (im)migration policy has developed in such a unique direction, only to mention the so-called White Australia Policy rules.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the topic of the paper covers the period between 1787 and 1914 that is the very beginnings of immigration to Australia. It is possible to distinguish a number of stages of the development of immigration to Australia. The paper concerns the first stage of immigration, which encompasses the time between the landing of the first British ships, carrying the first group of convicts/colonists (1787) and the outbreak of World War I (1914), which prompted a rapid change of Australian immigration rules since a lot of citizens of various states desired to emigrate to this safe, calm and prosperous country. A major turning point was the adoption of the first law aimed at restricting immigration to Australia, the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, which in fact initiated the White Australia Policy. However, one should keep in mind the previous Lambing Flat events (1861), when European-origin colonists and gold diggers brutally attacked their Chinese counterparts, being jealous about their results. The influx of immigrants from Asia, in particular from China, had been a key issue for the authorities. The above-

---

\* Dr hab., Assistant Professor, PhD, D.Litt. in Political Science, Institute of International Relations, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, Warsaw University, Poland; e-mail: k.marczuk@uw.edu.pl.

<sup>1</sup> For more, see: K. P. Marczuk, *Australia's History and Background of Migration and Refugee Policies – Lessons for the EU and its Member States?*, in “Yearbook of Polish European Studies”, Vol. 19, 2016 (to be published soon).

mentioned events are crucial for understanding the genesis and development of Australia's migration policy.

The main argument is that it was mainly the impact of Chinese immigration that prompted a turn of Australia's migration policy which started to be much more restrictive and eventually led to the establishment of the White Australia Policy regime. The White Australia Policy was focused on eliminating non-European immigration to Australia. British citizens who intended to settle in Australia were the most wanted, while people of different races were not welcomed so openly. This tendency prevailed for a long time – from the adoption of the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, through the amendment of 1958, to the beginning of the 1970s, when both the political scene in Australia and the international situation changed due to the Vietnam War and the need for Australia to accept post-war refugees.

The questions posed in this article concern, first, the characteristics of the immigration to Australia at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is during the first years of the colonization of Australia by Great Britain. What were the scale and the role of Chinese immigration in this period? Second, how did the immigration policy of Australia develop between 1901 and 1914? What was the White Australia Policy in this period, and what were its main assumptions?

To answer these questions the author has used a variety of sources, mainly primary ones. Statistical data was derived from historical publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, namely yearbooks and censuses, which are exciting reads not only for scholars but also for everyone who is interested in early Australian studies. Thanks to the electronic project of the National Library of Australia called *Trove*, it was possible to quote newspapers published at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as in the framework of *Trove* many of them were digitalized and made available to the public.

The paper ends with conclusions. The deliberations presented here do by no means exhaust the subject, and only a piece of history of the immigration to Australia has been presented.

### **Immigration to Australia at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries**

At the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, new arrivals to Australia were predominantly immigrants from the United Kingdom who had abused the Commonwealth law. The next group were gold diggers, especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; after Edward Hammond Hargraves found a goldfield in New South Wales in 1851<sup>2</sup>, diggers not only from Europe but also from Asia, mainly from

---

<sup>2</sup> For more, see: B. Mitchell, *Hargraves, Edward Hammond (1816–1891)*, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 4, Melbourne, 1972, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hargraves-edward-hammond-3719> (accessed on: 3.12.2016).

China, started coming to Australia, and thus Australia was transformed from a UK penal colony into a country where one could quickly become rich.

The very beginning of immigration to Australia is linked with anti-Chinese movements of its European-origin inhabitants. The greatest outburst of anti-Chinese sentiments happened in 1861 in a gold camp Lambing Flat, when Chinese diggers were attacked by European ones, jealous about results of their work. The most brutal events took place on 14 July 1861.<sup>3</sup> *The Courier*, a newspaper issued in Brisbane, gave a detailed eye-witness account on 15 July 1861:

‘I am camped at Demondrill Creek, about six or eight miles from Lambing Flat. On the creek and neighbourhood, there were about 2000 or more Chinese digging, and apparently doing well. I am not near the Chinese, but sufficiently near to witness one of the most barbarous scenes I ever saw, or wish to see again. For some days past, there has been great talk of a “roll up” on the part of the diggers to expel the Chinese. Today the affair took place in earnest. About ten o’clock this morning, the diggers from the “rush”, some 5000, came on to the flat, headed by a band of music, and a number of flags – one flag in particular had emblazoned on it in large characters “No Chinese”. A great number of the Chinese were camped, and some were digging. The diggers commenced a most brutal attack on them, and after routing, cutting off their “tails”, and the ears of some of them, destroyed their tents and tools, also all kinds of food that the Chinese had stored up for use; bags of rice were cut open and thrown on to fires that were lighted for that purpose, buckets, tubs, cradle, etc., were also burnt. The diggers then started from the Flat, for this place, headed, of course, by the German band, and the flag-bearer. The Chinese hearing of their approach, at once commenced to pack up everything they could lay their hands on. Before the mob of diggers made their appearance some hundreds got clear off with their swags, but some 1500 were caught leaving with their swags on their backs. They were driven on to an open space of land, and there bailed up, and then brutally attacked by the diggers with sticks, etc. This part of the affair was most heart-rending; the Chinese dropt their swags and took to running, but on being perceived were followed and beaten about the head, buck, legs, and body in a most frightful manner. Their “tails” were cut off with blunt knives. The shrieks of the Chinese were dreadful. During the attack, tents, tools, and wearables were burnt, together with a large quantity of general stores. As the work of demolition concluded, the diggers returned to the Flat, headed by the band, and flags, one of which was decorated with a number of Chinamen’s “tails”. Tonight all is still, the place lately occupied by the Chinese looks dark and desolate, with the exception of the fires still burning with

---

<sup>3</sup> For more, see: National Museum of Australia, *Lambing flat riots* [online], [http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/collection\\_interactives/endurance\\_scroll/harvest\\_of\\_endurance\\_html\\_version/expl\\_ore\\_the\\_scroll/lambing\\_flat\\_riots](http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/collection_interactives/endurance_scroll/harvest_of_endurance_html_version/expl_ore_the_scroll/lambing_flat_riots) (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

Chinese property. I stood in front of our tent and witnessed all that took place; we are camped within a stone's throw of the troopers' camp'.<sup>4</sup>

After the Lambing Flat riots, the authorities of individual Australian colonies began adopting anti-Chinese laws in order to restrict the influx of Chinese immigrants. This tendency later turned into the so-called White Australia Policy, that is an Australian migration policy aimed at stopping all unwanted immigrants, originally mainly those from China. Until 1901, all immigrants were divided into four main groups: those who were sentenced by British courts (initially they were sent to New South Wales and Tasmania); those who were chosen by colonialists as a reward; assisted immigrants who were supported by the government of the UK; and those who decided to emigrate by themselves, such as gold diggers. Chinese immigrants belonged mainly to the last group. Assisted immigrants, on the other hand, had started arriving in Australia in 1832, and the policy of assisted immigration had been developed until 1887. For instance, between 1860 and 1887 some 78,500 men, women and children up to 12 years of age came from the UK while only 1,600 people came from other states.<sup>5</sup> According to the 1911 Census, until 1910 about 700,000 assisted immigrants arrived in Australia.<sup>6</sup>

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the statistics were done for separate colonies since Australia had not yet been united, which eventually happened in 1901. In 1887, one hundred years after the beginning of British settlement in Australia, approximately 3 million people were living in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, West Australia and Tasmania. New South Wales and Victoria had the highest populations (one million in each of them), while West Australia had the smallest one (about 42,500). Between 1861 and 1887, the population of New South Wales grew rapidly – from 350,000 in 1861 to more than one million only 26 years later, in 1887<sup>7</sup>. There were three main causes of this trend: first, the number of births was rising, which meant that the society was young; second, more and more unassisted immigrants chose to migrate to New South Wales, coming there voluntary, to search for gold, among others; and, last but not least, the British government supported those people who intended to emigrate and settle

---

<sup>4</sup> "The Courier", 15 July 1861, see: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4599932?SearchTerm=lambing%20flat&searchLimits=exactPhrase||dateTo=1861-07-31||notWords||anyWords||dateFrom=1861-07-14||requestHandler||sortBy=dateAsc> (accessed on: 23.03.2017) (original spelling).

<sup>5</sup> See: T. A. Coghlan, *The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales 1887–1888*, Sydney 1888, pp. 310–311.

<sup>6</sup> See: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne, "Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia" 1912, no. 5, p. 140, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/ED453454A83D1B58CA257AEE0013637B/\\$File/13010\\_1901\\_1911%20section%204.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/ED453454A83D1B58CA257AEE0013637B/$File/13010_1901_1911%20section%204.pdf) (accessed on: 25.03.2017).

<sup>7</sup> For more, see: *Ibidem*, p. 307.

there. The aim was to settle new territories with British citizens who would lay the foundations for the prosperity of the new colony.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from immigrants from the UK, also the Chinese were arriving in Australia, attracted mainly by the gold rush, hoping that they too could quickly become rich. That is why they emigrated predominantly to New South Wales and Victoria, where goldfields had been discovered. The number of Chinese was growing quickly, and in 1881 almost 40,000 of them were living throughout the Australian colonies (in comparison, at that time Tasmania had a total population of 40,000)<sup>9</sup> (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

Chinese immigrants in Australian colonies (1881)

Colony	Number of Chinese immigrants
Victoria	12,128
Queensland	11,229
New South Wales	10,205
South Australia	4,151
Tasmania	844
West Australia	145
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,702</b>

Source: T. A. Coghlan, *The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales 1887–1888*, Sydney 1888, p. 314.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Australian colonies adopted laws aimed at restricting the influx of immigrants from China. Moreover, they imposed entry taxes on the Chinese in order to discourage them from coming to Australia. The first such laws were passed in New South Wales and Victoria, where the majority of Chinese gold diggers lived. In Victoria, in early 1855 the master of the ship had to pay tax for every Chinese on board. In 1857, the authorities passed a law that forced the Chinese to buy a renewable licence, which allowed them to stay in Australia for two months.<sup>10</sup>

These restrictions had a considerable impact on the size of the Chinese population in Australia. For example: while in 1861 some 13,000 Chinese were living in New South Wales, in 1871 it was only half of this number due to the

<sup>8</sup> For more, see: *Ibidem*, p. 308.

<sup>9</sup> For more, see: *Ibidem*, p. 314.

<sup>10</sup> For more, see: J. Lee, *Anti-Chinese Legislation in Australasia*, in "The Quarterly Journal of Economics" 1889, Vol. 3, no. 2, p. 218.

restrictions imposed on Chinese immigrants. However, in the following years the number increased.<sup>11</sup> Between 1861 and 1871, the memory of the Lambing Flat events was still fresh and a lot of Chinese departed. In 1881, the New South Wales government passed the Influx of Chinese Restriction Act, according to which the master of every vessel arriving in New South Wales was obliged to report the number of Chinese on board and their personal data, and he had to pay tax for them: ten pounds per every Chinese immigrant.<sup>12</sup>

Another issue was the number of those Chinese who were naturalized – this number was much higher than the number of naturalized immigrants from other states. Between 1871 and 1886, out of about 4,000 naturalized inhabitants, especially in Victoria, 3,000 had been born in China.<sup>13</sup> In New South Wales, in turn, more than 700 Chinese were naturalized between 1878 and 1887 compared to 434 Germans and 101 Danes, the two top groups among all European immigrants.<sup>14</sup>

The restriction of Chinese immigration was a challenge for all the colonies. Therefore, the question was brought up at the Intercolonial Conference held on 12 June 1888. In the issue from the day of the Conference, *The Sydney Morning Herald* announced that its aim was to find a solution that would later be used during the law-making process aimed at restricting immigration from China<sup>15</sup>. This led to the beginning of the White Australia Policy.

### **Beginning of the White Australia Policy, 1901–1914**

A new state – the Commonwealth of Australia – was created in 1901 after the unification of former Australian colonies, and one of the first laws passed by the new authorities was the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act. The Act is important due to the fact that it is perceived as the beginning of the White Australia Policy, the policy aimed at restricting immigration of non-Europeans, originally mainly from China. Apart from this law, there were also two other acts that laid the foundation for the White Australia Policy: the Post and Telegraph Act and the Pacific Islands Labourers Act.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For more, see: T. A. Coghlan, *The Wealth and Progress ...*, p. 312.

<sup>12</sup> For more, see: Influx of Chinese Restriction Act, 6 December 1881, no. 3, [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/num\\_act/iocrao1881n23361/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/num_act/iocrao1881n23361/) (accessed on: 22.03.2017).

<sup>13</sup> For more, see: T. A. Coghlan, *The Wealth and Progress ...*, pp. 325–326.

<sup>14</sup> For more, see: *Ibidem*, p. 325.

<sup>15</sup> For more see: “The Sydney Morning Herald”, 12 June 1888, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13688991> (accessed on: 22.03.2017). There were three Intercolonial Conferences dedicated to the issue of immigration from China (1880, 1888 and 1896).

<sup>16</sup> For more, see: C. Moore, „Good-bye, Queensland, good-bye, White Australia; Good-bye Christians”: *Australia’s South Sea Islander Community and Deportation, 1901-1908*, in “The New Federalist” 2000, Vol. 4, p. 22.

The main aim of the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act was to bar ‘prohibited immigrants’ from entering Australian territory. This concerned, first, those people who would not be able to pass a dictation test (a passage of 50 words in a language chosen by the immigration officer, and it did not necessarily have to be English, it could be any European language, for example Italian or Lithuanian). Second, it concerned „any idiot or insane person”, „any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease of a loathsome or dangerous character” and „any person who has within three years been convicted of an offence, not being a mere political offence, and has been sentenced to imprisonment for one year or longer therefor, and has not received a pardon” or „any prostitute or person living on the prostitution of others”<sup>17</sup>. The government frankly said that the main reason why the law had been approved was to prevent unwanted immigration, mostly from China.<sup>18</sup> The Immigration Restriction Act was passed on 23 December 1901 and was in power until 1 January 1959, when it was replaced by the 1958 Migration Act.

The main tool of the White Australia Policy was the dictation test, but it was perceived as highly controversial due to its discretionary nature, and it prompted the government of Japan to intervene in 1905 in defence of immigrants from Asia. The scholars Iain Stewart, Jessie Hohmann and Kel Robertson analysed a case study of a British woman, born in India, Mrs. Mabel Freer, who came to Australia from India in 1936. The Australian immigration officer did not allow her to enter the Australian territory twice because she had not passed a dictation test in Italian (*sic!*). In her view, however, the real reason for refusal was her intention to marry an Australian citizen who had at that time been already married to an Australian woman but wanted to get divorced (Mrs. Freer was also divorced), which the puritan authorities did not approve of.<sup>19</sup> The dictation test was applied until 1958 and prompted a decrease in immigration, mainly from Asia.

In addition, the 1901 Post and Telegraph Act contained provisions ordering the employment of white people: „No contract or arrangement for the carriage of mails shall be entered into on behalf of the Commonwealth unless it contains a condition that only white labour shall be employed in such carriage”<sup>20</sup>. Another law passed in 1901 was the Pacific Islands Labourers Act aimed at deporting labourers born on the Pacific Islands who worked in Australia (mainly in Queensland and New

---

<sup>17</sup> *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, no. 17/1901, see: [http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/cth4ii\\_doc\\_1901a.pdf](http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/cth4ii_doc_1901a.pdf) (accessed on: 3.12.2016).

<sup>18</sup> For more see: “The Sydney Morning Herald”, 3 January 1902, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/news/paper/article/14447017?searchTerm=Immigration%20Restriction%20Act&searchLimits=exactPhrase|||anyWords|||notWords|||requestHandler|||dateFrom=1901-12-23|||dateTo=1902-01-10|||sortBy> (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

<sup>19</sup> For more see: I. Stewart, J. Hohmann, K. Robertson, *Dictating to One of ‘Us’: The Migration of Mrs Freer*, in “Macquarie Law Journal”, 2005, Vol. 5, pp. 241–275.

<sup>20</sup> Post and Telegraph Act 1901, no. 12/1901, Article 16.1, see: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1901A00012> (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

South Wales and who worked on sugar and cotton plantations). Pacific Island labourers (*kanakas*) included „[...] all natives not of European extraction of any island except the islands of New Zealand situated in the Pacific Ocean beyond the Commonwealth as constituted at the commencement of this Act”<sup>21</sup>.

Labourers from the Pacific Islands came to Australia for the first time in 1863 (67 men from present-day Vanuatu who were supposed to work on a cotton plantation). Between 1863 and 1904, about 62,000 labourers and servants came to Queensland and New South Wales. Many of them later received land and decided to stay in Australia, although due to the Pacific Islands Labourers Act some of them were deported by 1906. Today their descendants form the Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) community.<sup>22</sup>

Until World War I, a number of laws devoted to immigration issues was passed. All of them implemented the White Australia Policy rules and were aimed at restricting immigration of non European-origin people. The 1903 Naturalization Act provided sharp rules regarding naturalization of those immigrants who were not citizens of Great Britain and came from Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands: „A person resident in the Commonwealth, not being a British subject, and not being an aboriginal native of Asia, Africa, or the Islands of the Pacific, excepting New Zealand, who intends to settle in the Commonwealth [...] may apply to the Governor-General for a certificate of naturalization”<sup>23</sup>. In fact, it meant that people of different origin had no chance to be naturalized. For instance, Senator William Higgs (Queensland) explained: „The object [...] is to prevent any of the 80,000 coloured aliens who are not naturalized at present, but who may be naturalized, or desire to be naturalized, in the future, from applying for Commonwealth naturalization papers”<sup>24</sup>. Although numerous senators were reluctant and afraid of newcomers of non-European origin, others did not agree with this trend.<sup>25</sup> The 1903 Naturalization Act was repealed in 1920 by the Nationality Act.<sup>26</sup>

In order to enhance the White Australia Policy, thus enhancing the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, the government decided to tighten the rules concerning employing immigrants (contract labourers). In 1905 the Contract Immigrants Act

<sup>21</sup> Pacific Islands Labourers Act 1901, no. 16/1901, Article 1, see: [http://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num\\_act/pila1901161901243/](http://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/pila1901161901243/) (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

<sup>22</sup> For more see: National Archives of Australia, *South Sea Islanders – Fact sheet 269* [online], <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs269.aspx> (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

<sup>23</sup> Naturalization Act 1903, no. 11/1903, Article 5, see: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1903A00011> (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

<sup>24</sup> W. Higgs, Naturalization Bill, Senate Hansard, 3 July 1903, see: <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22hansard80%2Fhansards80%2F1903-07-09%2F0027%22> (accessed on: 23.03.2017).

<sup>25</sup> For more see: C. Cooper, *The immigration debate in Australia: from Federation to World War One*, “Parliamentary Library” 16.07.2012, Parliament of Australia, Canberra, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> See: Nationality Act 1920, no. 48/1920, Article 5, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1920A00048> (accessed on: 23.03.2017).



was passed<sup>27</sup> with the aim to lead to a situation when the majority of immigrants would be British or Europeans. The then Prime Minister of Australia Alfred Deakin outlined: „No circumstances have arisen in Australia to lead to a proposal to introduce coloured labour under contract. This Bill, though applying to all persons coming here under, contract to perform manual labour, will really affect Europeans, and, so far as one can see, them only. [...] As I have said, over and over again, an empty Australia is not a White Australia”<sup>28</sup>.

Although until World War I the dominant policy was the protection of the Australian labour market from non-European immigrants (mainly from China), there were in fact not many laws aimed at preventing an influx of these immigrants. This does not mean, however, that the authorities were not interested in this issue.<sup>29</sup> The 1901 Census proved that 3.7 million inhabitants lived in Australia at that time (the most populous states being New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland); the majority of them were born in Australia, the UK or in other European states. Only 47,000 were born in Asia (Table 2). A decade later, in 1911, the next census showed there were 4.5 million inhabitants, 52,000 of them of non-European origin (Table 3).

**Table 2**

Inhabitants of Australia according to the place of birth (1901)

Place of birth	Australia	Great Britain	Other European states	Asia	New Zealand	Other	Unspecified	Total
Number of inhabitants	2,908,303	679,159	74,673	47,014	25,788	30,942	7,922	3,773,801

**Source:** own compilation on the basis of: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *A Snapshot of Australia, 1901*, [http://www.abs.gov.au/Websitedbs/D3110124.NSF/24e5997b9bf2ef35ca2567fb00299c59/c4abd1fac53e3df5ca256bd8001883ec!](http://www.abs.gov.au/Websitedbs/D3110124.NSF/24e5997b9bf2ef35ca2567fb00299c59/c4abd1fac53e3df5ca256bd8001883ec!OpenDocument) OpenDocument (accessed on: 25.03.2017).

<sup>27</sup> For more see: Contract Immigrants Act 1905, no. 19/1905, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1905A00019> (accessed on: 25.03.2017).

<sup>28</sup> A. Deakin, Contract Immigrants Bill: Second reading, House of Representatives, House Hansard, 10 November 1905, see: <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22hansard80%2Fhansardr80%2F1905-11-10%2F0022%22> (accessed on: 25.03.2017).

<sup>29</sup> See: C. Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

**Table 3**

## Inhabitants of Australia with non-European origin (1911)

Origin	Australian/half-blood Aboriginals	Asiatic	African	American	Polynesian	Unspecified	Total
Number of inhabitants	10,113	38,690	693	89	2,751	7	52,343

**Source:** own compilation on the basis of: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne, “Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia” 1912, no. 5, p. 122, [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/ED453454A83D1B58CA257AEE0013637B/\\$File/13010\\_1901\\_1911%20section%204.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/ED453454A83D1B58CA257AEE0013637B/$File/13010_1901_1911%20section%204.pdf) (accessed on: 25.03.2017).

Until the outbreak of World War I, the number of immigrants arriving in Australia was increasing: there were approximately 150,000 assisted immigrants in total.<sup>30</sup> The authorities wanted to settle them in areas that were empty and unpopulated. A particularly large number of immigrants arrived in Australia between 1910 and 1913, while towards the end of the war almost no immigrants were accepted (until 1919). As Michele Langfield observed: „The war period, however, served to reinforce previously-held views on the size, composition and distribution of Australia’s future population: that it should be predominantly British, that non-Europeans should be denied entry, and that immigrants should be directed to rural rather than urban areas. The war also strengthened British Imperial ties and led to plans to redistribute the population of the Empire through a variety of immigration and development projects after the war”<sup>31</sup>.

The issue of restriction of immigration became urgent when World War I broke out. In 1914 the War Precautions Act was passed, which allowed the Governor – in order to protect public security and defend the country – to take up the measures focused on prohibiting foreigners from entering Australia or deporting them. Moreover, some restrictions regarding transporting money and goods out of the country were enacted.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> For more see: M. Langfield, *More People Imperative Immigration to Australia, 1901–39*, National Archives of Australia, Commonwealth of Australia 1999, see: <http://guides.naa.gov.au/more-people-imperative/chapter1/index.aspx> (accessed on: 26.03.2017).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> See: War Precautions Act 1914, no. 10/1914, Article 5, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1914A00010> (accessed on: 25.03.2017).

## Conclusions

Being a former British colony, Australia has always had close ties with the UK, and this is also visible in the structure of immigration. From the very beginning, British immigrants were very much appreciated, while others – especially of non-European origin – were only tolerated. The paradox is that the people who first came to Australia had been convicted by British courts, but they remained loyal to Great Britain. The next group of immigrants were those who wanted to quickly become rich, and Australia offered such a possibility in the form of its goldfields. Not only British and European gold diggers came to Australia but Chinese ones as well. The large-scale immigration and especially the influx of Chinese immigrants prompted such events as the Lambing Flat riots, which is a black episode in Australian history. Knowledge about the origins of immigration to Australia could offer an explanation of the state of Australia's contemporary migration policy.

The research undertaken in the paper could be concluded as following:

First, the origins of immigration to Australia are linked not only with the expulsion of British convicts but also with an influx of Chinese immigrants coming to Australia in search of gold. The numerous Chinese immigrants arrived at the Australian goldfields especially at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in New South Wales and Victoria. One should bear in mind that the Lambing Flat riots where about European diggers attacking Chinese ones – these events are important due to the fact that later the authorities of individual Australian colonies started to adopt laws aimed at restricting Chinese immigration. This led to the creation of the White Australia Policy, focusing on prohibiting non-European immigration, originally mainly from China.

Second, Australia's immigration policy between 1901 and 1914 was transformed into the White Australia Policy. The turning point was the adoption of the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, focused on preventing immigration of non-Europeans, initially mainly from China. The most controversial but also the most efficient tool of the White Australia Policy was a dictation test, which prevented many people from entering Australia. Another consequence of the White Australia Policy was a number of legal acts that concerned further restriction of immigration, including restrictions for those who wanted to work in Australia. The main goal was always to prevent non-European immigration, while British immigration in particular was supported. The outbreak of World War I provoked restriction of immigration as well.

The lessons learned confirm the formulated hypothesis. Predominantly Chinese immigration at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced Australia's policy towards immigration and led to the establishment of the White Australia Policy.

The aim was to eliminate non-European immigration to Australia and to attract mainly British citizens, who were supposed to settle in rural parts of Australia.

## **ORIGINS OF IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA, 1787–1914**

*(Abstract)*

The origins of immigration to Australia are intrinsically connected to the history of this state, that is its British, colonial heritage. Australia had been discovered, and then conquered, by Great Britain relatively late – the British fleet arrived to the Australian territory for the first time only towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to start the settlement of the British convicts. The paper concerns the first stage of immigration, which encompasses the time between the landing of the first British ships carrying the first group of convicts/colonists (1787) and the outbreak of World War I (1914) which prompted a rapid change of Australian immigration rules since a lot of citizens of various states desired to emigrate to this safe, calm and prosperous country. The main argument is that it was mainly the Chinese immigration impact which prompted a turn in Australia's migration policy, which started to be much more restrictive and eventually led to the establishment of the White Australia Policy.

*Keywords:* Australia, China, gold diggers, immigration, White Australia Policy.