

SHARING THE LODGE: THE BROKEN HILL MIGRANT STORY

Organisations Involved & Contact Details

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Aims & Target Group

Aims: Migrants who contributed to building the Broken Hill community early last century are often been overlooked in Broken Hill's official histories and the overall formation of Broken Hill community. This project aims to share the migrant history in Broken Hill with the entire community and help people appreciate migrants as important part of their history and community.

Project Description & Components

Sharing the Lode: the Broken Hill Migrant Story is a publication and an exhibition about Broken Hill's non-English speaking migrants who arrived in a harsh and alien outback mining town and chose to call it home.

The Committee employed family and local historian Christine Adams to undertake an oral history project which revealed the memories and recollections of migrants and their children in their own words.

The initial research for *Sharing the Lode* won the NSW Tidy Towns Cultural Heritage Conservation award in 2003.

BHMHC drew upon this research to produce a temporary display at the local Geocentre museum from December 2003 to April 2004, and subsequently self-published the book.

Launched by the NSW Premier at Broken Hill in November 2004, *Sharing the Lode* includes 80 oral histories, illustrating the city's heritage from the first Afghan pioneers in the 1890s to Filipino migrants in the 1990s.





Process

Migrants from many cultural backgrounds worked on the mines and serviced the Broken Hill community as builders, labourers and retailers. They shared the wealth of the city and its struggles, but have often been overlooked in Broken Hill's official histories.

In 2000 the Broken Hill Migrant Heritage Committee Inc. (BHMHC) was formed to investigate ways in which the city's cultural diversity and history could be preserved, with a focus on recording migration stories while they are still in living memory.

Outcomes

The book is in its second print-run now. The book has inspired a new *Sharing the Lode* exhibition at the Migrant Museum, Sulphide Street, Broken Hill which was launched by Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chair, Community Relations Commission in June 2006.

Profits from book sales will continue to support the Committee's vital work in recording the memories of migrant communities and documenting their special collections.

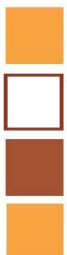
Challenges & Obstacles

The key challenge is to produce something similar again on a more regular basis so that other historical information about Broken Hill as an important outback region can be explored and shared with the community.

Funding

Financial support for the book was provided by the Migration Heritage Centre and the Community Relations Commission NSW.

Other contributors and supporters were the BHMHC, Broken Hill migrants and their descendants, Broken Hill Community Foundation, Broken Hill Italo-International Club Inc and the Napredak Club.





Images

'Bundle Mary'



'Bundle Mary' (1868-1955) Photograph held by Ramon Ware

Older Broken Hill residents remember 'Bundle Mary' (Marina Boulus Kuram) as an old woman wandering the streets of the city selling her wares to all and sundry in the first half of the last century. She courageously left Lebanon with her young daughter and joined her brother in Broken Hill because she was looking for a better life.

