

French migration to Australia in the post WWII period: Benevolent tolerance and cautious collaboration

Eric Bouvet
(Flinders University)

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to consider the diplomatic relations between France and Australia in the three decades following World War II with a view to documenting the events that contributed to the development of French migration to Australia. This period is significant in the context of the history of the French in Australia because in the thirty years that followed the war, more French migrants arrived in Australia than at any other time in the history of the French presence in this country.

The few studies that have been concerned with French migration to Australia have not examined in great detail the events that took place during this time. In order to shed light on the diplomatic relations between France and Australia relative to the question of French migration, I have analysed archival materials, including formerly classified Commonwealth and diplomatic correspondence recently released by the National Archives of Australia.

Before presenting an account of the events that shaped post World War II migration from France, this article will outline the state of the research on the French in Australia and provide an overview of the development of the French community in Australia from the days of settlement to the early 1970s.

1. Aim and scope of the study

Significant losses in the two world wars, troubles in the colonies, and rapid economic expansion put much pressure on the manpower available in France after 1945. As a result, during the 30 years following the war, a period known as the *Trente Glorieuses*¹ in French history, the pressing need for labour to feed the French economy had a determining influence on the French government's attitude towards the emigration of French citizens to foreign lands and to Australia in particular.

¹ Thirty *glorious* years following the war, during which France enjoyed economic prosperity.

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Following World War II, in the new context of mass immigration, the Australian authorities were keen to include a French element in their migrant mix. In fact, from colonial times, the French in Australia had demonstrated that they could settle well in Australia and contribute effectively to society (Rosemberg 1978; Stuer 1982). Their professional skills, their adaptability and entrepreneurial spirit, among other qualities, made them desirable migrants. However, as is suggested by archival evidence presented here, Australia's attempts to attract migrants from France were hindered by the French government's reluctance to let its citizens migrate overseas. If migration out of France was tolerated by the French for diplomatic reasons (Australia had been a valuable ally during the war), it was not a political option. Nevertheless, the potential of France as a migrant source country was tangible enough for Australia to extend several assisted migration schemes to France.

The objective of this study is to consider the diplomatic relations between France and Australia in the three decades following WWII and document the events that led to the development of French migration² to Australia. This period is significant in the context of the history of the French in Australia because in the thirty years that followed the war, more French migrants arrived in Australia than at any other time in the history of the French presence in this country. The French influx culminated in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the arrival of over 10,000 French settlers in Australia. To achieve its aim, this study draws from archival sources, including diplomatic and classified correspondence emanating from the Department of Immigration recently released by the National Archives of Australia.

Before presenting an account of French migration from 1945 to the early 1970s, I will outline the present state of research on the French in Australia. I will also provide an overview of the development of the French community in Australia from the days of settlement to the early 1970s.

2. Background to the study

2.1. Previous studies of the French in Australia

French migration to Australia constitutes a small phenomenon on the migration scale. Indeed, official statistics tell us that the number of French nationals living in Australia is low compared with that of non-English speaking European communities, such as the Dutch, the Greek, the German, and the Italian groups.³ It can be also said that, historically, the French have shown a propensity for easy socio-cultural integration, as

² In this article I am using the term *migration* since it is routinely used in the archival documents consulted for this research. These documents refer to *French migration* to describe the general flux of French nationals from France to Australia. They also refer to *French migrants* to describe individuals who settled in Australia or intended to settle in Australia, whether or not they benefited from assisted migration programmes. A discussion of the semantic framing of the term *migration* or, indeed, of the adequacy of the *migration* as applied to the French context, would be interesting; however, I feel that it is outside the scope of this paper.

³ According to census statistics, in 2001 there were 17,260 France-born persons living in Australia, compared with Italy-born =218,750; Greece-born = 116,530; Germany-born = 108,240; Netherlands-born = 83,250 (see Community Summaries available at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/textversion/>).

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suggested by Stuer (1982) and Beving (2006). These are the reasons why Ghislaine van Maanen (2004) has aptly dubbed Australian French “the invisible migrant”. It is perhaps because of the lack of visibility of French nationals in this country that *the French in Australia*, as a subject of research, has not been the topic of much scholarly work. In the following paragraphs I will examine briefly the studies that have been written on the topic.

In the 1970s, an article by Rosemberg (1978) gave an overview of the main characteristics of the French presence in Australia. The merit of Rosemberg’s short study is to have defined the trends of French migration over time. The author categorised the different groups of French migrants as follows: “The free settlers from the early 19th century”; “the gold miners from the 1850s”; “the refugees from the Commune de Paris”; “the wool buyers”; “the post-war migrants of the two world wars”, “the air-farers” and “the specialists” of the 1970s. These categories form the backbone of the history of the French in Australia.

Rosemberg’s article was followed, a few years later, by Stuer’s *The French in Australia*, a doctoral thesis published as a monograph in 1982. Stuer’s work is the most exhaustive investigation to date. Drawing from demographic statistics, archival documents and interviews, it accounts in detail for the French presence in Australia from the early colonial days to the 1970s. Although the book is undeniably a rich source of facts, figures and bibliographical information, it may be argued that the post-World War II period, dealt with in the concluding chapter, is perhaps the least developed period in Stuer’s very well researched history of the French in Australia. Nevertheless, Stuer’s work on the post-World War II era constitutes a sound basis for further research into French migration to Australia.⁴

In 1984, a volume of papers entitled *The French-Australian cultural connection* (Nisbet & Blackman 1984) was published following a conference that took place at the University of New South Wales in 1983. The book presented a wide multidisciplinary account of the French influence in Australia. Articles ranged from the statistical report written by André Barbe, Consul Général de France, on the situation of the French in Australia in the early 1980s, to historical accounts, such as the contribution of French navigators to the exploration of the Australian coasts written by Helen Rosenman.

In 1987, *Francophonie et multiculturalisme*, the work of Daniel Baggioni, a French visiting scholar at University of New South Wales, was published. The study looked at francophone diversity in Australia. Drawing from interview data of francophone migrants of the first and second generations, it explored issues of identity, multiculturalism and language education.

Robert Aldrich published in 1990 a volume entitled *The French presence in the South Pacific, 1842-1940*. Although the study did not focus exclusively on Australia, it

An estimated 56,500 French nationals (France and overseas-born) live in Australia, according to the French Embassy (<http://www.ambafrance-au.org/>).

According to Charles Price, in 1999 the ethnic strength of French in Australia (ethnic intermixture or ethnic affiliation) was 86,330 (0.46% of the population) compared with 670,000 for German (5.53% of the population) (Price 1999).

⁴ Rosemberg also completed a Master of Arts thesis in 1985, (unpublished), in which he traced the lives of Ferdinand François Baillièrre and of Maurice Carton, two notable Frenchmen who lived in Victoria. Rosemberg also devoted a chapter of his thesis to a discussion of French-Australian cultural encounters.

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looked at the impact of the French in the region, particularly from a commercial point of view.

The early 2000s has witnessed increased interest in the study of the French in Australia. Recently, at the University of Western Australia, Ghislaine van Mannen wrote “The invisible man” (2004), an article that deals with the representations of France and the French in Australia. At Flinders University, Eric Bouvet and Elizabeth Boudet-Griffin published in 2005 “What Alien registration documents can tell us”, a quantitative study of French migrants in South Australia in the period 1955-1971. In another recent article entitled “The French presence in Sydney and the establishment of the French Chamber of Commerce” (2005), Ivan Barko described the life of the French colony in Sydney in the 1890s. It is also worth mentioning that one of the most recent academic pieces of research, an unpublished Masters thesis by Adeline Beving (2006) entitled *France Down Under, constructions et strategies identitaires chez les Français de Sydney*, investigated the French community in Sydney. Drawing her data from migrants’ accounts, Beving retraced the steps of the French who came to Australia from the 1950s to the early 2000s. One of the focal points of Beving’s thesis is the analysis of process and product of the construction of identity(ies) among French migrants.

The studies mentioned above are, in the main, eclectic. They look at a number of historical, demographic, sociological aspects of the French in Australia. Some investigations, like those of Rosemberg (1978), Stuer (1982, 1988), and Beving (2006)⁵ are directly concerned with migration and community organisation. However, none of them has given particular emphasis to the thirty year period after the war, during which Australia attempted to increase the immigration flow from France, a time when more French nationals travelled to Australia than at any other time during the history of the French in Australia. Scholars such as Stuer (1982 and 1988) have identified likely causes for the increase in French migration in the post-war period, such as the outcome of the Algerian war, the availability of migration programmes, the influence of Mai 68, etc. However, the account of the relationship between France and Australia, which is central to gaining an understanding of post-war migration from France, as well as the respective role of France and Australia in the development of French migration, has been largely ignored. The present study therefore aims to contribute further to the scholarship related to the French in Australia by identifying and documenting the events that played a part in the development of post World War II French migration to Australia.

2.2. Overview of the French in Australia to the early 1970: facts and figures

French migration to Australia began during the late eighteenth century when small numbers of prisoners, refugees from the French Revolution and government officials arrived in the newly established British colony of New South Wales.

Between 1830 and 1850, the number of French immigrants in Australia gradually increased to several hundred, many of whom were young men. The young migrants, who originated from sea-faring regions of France such as Aquitaine or Normandy, were government officials, businessmen and agriculturalists (Stuer 1982). These early French migrants usually integrated well within the Anglo-Australian community and played an

⁵ The thesis was unpublished at the time the present article was written.

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active role in the economic and social life of the British colony.

Between 1852 and 1871, the Victorian Gold Rush led to a marked increase in the number of French migrants who arrived in Australia. Frustrated by political unrest and difficult working conditions, hundreds of Frenchmen travelled to Australia in the hope of finding gold in Victoria. In 1857, there were over 1,426 French people living in Australia (Jupp & York 1995). Those who remained in Australia after leaving the goldfields found work as tradesmen, agriculturalists, winemakers or traders (Stuer 1982).

The late-nineteenth century saw the establishment of several commercial institutions such as agencies for the Comptoir National d'Escompte (a Paris bank) and the French Chamber of Commerce, the opening by La Compagnie Maritime of a shipping route to New Caledonia via Sydney, and the creation of *Le Courier Australien*, a French-language newspaper first published in Sydney in 1896. Around the turn of the twentieth century the wool trade provided another opportunity for French migrants to settle in Australia. As the textile industry grew in Northern France, a number of wool buyers migrated to Australia with their families (Aldrich 1984).

The outbreak of World War I saw a decrease in the French population in Australia, as a number of French nationals went to France to defend their country of birth. After the war, the war brides, French women who had married Australian soldiers in France, migrated to Australia to be reunited with their husbands. These war brides constituted a small, but significant contribution to an otherwise largely male-dominated French migration influx. Following the devastation caused by the war, the French government actively encouraged its citizens to return to France in order to participate in the reconstruction effort.

During World War II relations between France and Australia were strengthened as the Australian government supported the French war effort by providing troops, medical supplies and diplomatic assistance. This spirit of goodwill between the two countries, the considerable increase in the French birth-rates, and the disillusionment of some French people following the war, may have contributed to the expansion of the French population overseas and in Australia during the post-war years.

After World War II, an assisted passage scheme for British and Allied ex-servicemen and their dependents was extended in 1947 or early 1948 to ex-servicemen and resistance fighters of other countries including France.⁶ The scheme concluded in 1954. The *General Assisted Passage Scheme* (G.A.P.S.), a unilateral arrangement, followed the ex-servicemen scheme and was made available to the French in late 1960.⁷ Approved applicants were eligible to receive assistance with accommodation and

⁶ The date of the extension to France of the ex-servicemen scheme is uncertain. Stuer (1982) states that the scheme was extended to France in 1947. This information comes from a document entitled *Australia's immigration programme – Planning the future. A Report to the Minister of State for Immigration* published in 1968. This source states that “[t]he General Assisted Passage Scheme (GAPS) in effect replaced in 1954 the Empire and Allied Ex-Servicemen’s Scheme” (p. 56). However, in *Immigration, Policy and progress* (1949), Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, states the following: “In May, 1947, Cabinet approved a scheme to provide financial assistance towards the passage to Australia for the benefit of Empire and Allied ex-servicemen and women and the dependants. Up to March, 1948, these benefits had been confined to British and United States citizens. The new scheme extended the benefits of assisted passage to ex-servicemen of the five additional nations. I stated in the announcement: ‘The scheme will be further extended to include, with their dependants, nationals of Holland, Belgium, France, Norway and Denmark’” (p. 57).

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employment on arrival in Australia. A subsequent scheme, the *Special Passage Assistance Programme* (S.P.A.P.), took effect on 1 July 1966, replacing the G.A.P.S. Approved S.P.A.P. applicants were required to “represent a useful addition to the workforce”, while being capable of “ready integration into the Australian community”.⁸ The S.P.A.P. specifically intended to attract skilled and semi-skilled workers from Western European countries such as France.⁹ It is under the S.P.A.P. that the greatest number of French migrants arrived in Australia. By 1971, the French-born population in Australia had reached 11,845 people (Jupp & York 1995), after which the migration pace started to slow down. In 1974, the French-born population had reached 12,066 migrants (Jupp & York 1995). Today it stands at over 17,000 individuals.

It has been argued that, in addition to incentives such as sponsored passages and the certainty of employment, two major socio-political events that affected the French from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s could have played a part in enticing a number of French people to consider emigration (Stuer 1982). The first event was the independence gained by several former French colonies in Northern Africa, which resulted in the forced repatriation to France of hundreds of thousands of French settlers. In their quantitative study of migrant registration documents, Bouvet & Boudet-Griffin (2005) have corroborated this claim by showing that a significant percentage of French nationals from northern Africa settled in South Australia during the early to mid-1960s. The other important event was the protests of May 1968. Political instability in France and violent social unrest may have increased the desire of some to emigrate. Indeed, between 1969 and 1970, the number of arrivals in Australia from France was 2,215, more than double the figure of 1,018 arrivals for the 1967-1968 period (Stuer 1982).

3. Post-World War II development of French migration to Australia *The Australian exhibition in Paris and its consequences*

The starting point for the post-WWII French migration to Australia may have been a modest exhibition held in 1945 to promote the Australian war effort. The exhibition, entitled in French *L’Australie dans la paix et dans la guerre* (“Australia in peace and war”), was set up in one of the upper floors of *Magasins du Printemps*, a large department store in Paris.¹⁰ It featured exhibits and photographs that focused on the

⁷ Until now it was assumed that the G.A.P.S. had been extended to France in 1954 (Stuer 1982; Bouvet & Boudet-Griffin 2005). The date 1954 marking the commencement of the scheme in France appears on page 56 of the *Report to the Minister of State for Immigration* published in 1968. However, documents consulted for this research contained in the NAA file *A1838, 25/1/3/10, Part 1* make clear, as reported in Section 3. below, that negotiations to extend the G.A.P.S. to France took place only in 1959. The scheme was subsequently made available to the French in 1960.

⁸ Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council. (1968). *Australia’s immigration programme – Planning the future*. Reports to the Minister of State for Immigration.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, France: Migration to Australia, F. Stuart, 28 September 1945. This file focuses on the preparation and the outcome of the Australian exhibition in Paris described in Section 3. An application for access also had to be lodged to view this file. It complements another NAA file (*A1066*,

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Pacific war, but it also presented aspects of Australian life and industry. The Australian exhibition, held from 20 June to the end of August, proved to be quite popular among the Parisians. It is reported that the exhibition was visited by as many as a quarter of a million people and that pamphlets in French describing “the potentialities and trade possibilities of Australia” were available to the Parisian public.¹¹

A few weeks after the Australian exhibition in Paris had ended, a memorandum from the newly established Australian Legation in Paris to the Department of External Affairs in Canberra stated that “considerable interest [was] being shown in France in the possibility of emigration to Australia”.¹² The dispatch added that the exhibition had been the subject of exaggerated reports by the press that announced that the Australian government was offering attractive work contracts and assistance to intending migrants. In a country destabilised by the war and morally depressed,¹³ the prospects of migrating to Australia prompted 8,000 queries between the end of June and the end of September 1945.¹⁴

In the wake of exaggerations and rumours associated with the Australian exhibition, some aspiring French migrants approached the French Ministry of Agriculture to enquire about the possibility of land being granted to them if they went to Australia. In November 1945, the French Legation in Australia formally requested information from the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this matter. In its answer to the French Legation, Foreign Affairs pointed out that “the Australian Government [did not] propose to grant land to immigrants”. However, “applications from individual migrants from France would, of course, be sympathetically considered”.¹⁵

The effect of the Australian exhibition in Paris was important because it aroused the interest of a number of French people who now contemplated the idea of migrating to Australia. It also prompted the Australian authorities to consider France as a potential migrant source country. There were benefits to be gained from encouraging the French to come to Australia, especially in terms of human capital. A memorandum from the Australian Legation in Paris to Department of External Affairs listed the professional profile of 423 applicants for migration. Among the most represented skilled professional categories were Civil engineers (20), Clerks (17), Farmers, (15), Mechanics (14), Draughtsmen (12), Electrical engineers (11), and Aircraft technicians (10), all of whom were sought after by the Australian authorities.¹⁶ Benefits were also seen in terms of commercial investments and developments in Australia. Shortly after the Australian

PI45218 already consulted by Stuer (1982).

¹¹ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, France: Migration to Australia, 20 June 1945.

¹² NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, France: Migration to Australia, F. Stuart, 28 September 1945.

¹³ Fleurance (1948) cites the results of a survey carried out by the Institut Français d’Opinion Publique. According to the survey, in 1946 38% of the French under 35 wished to migrate overseas.

¹⁴ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, France: Migration to Australia. H.E. Holland. 28 September 1945.

¹⁵ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, France: Migration to Australia, 11 January 1946.

¹⁶ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, France: Migration to Australia, F. Stuart, 28 September 1945.

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exhibition had opened in Paris, the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction in Canberra requested information from the Australian Legation regarding “the possibility of industries in France (...) establishing subsidiary factories in Australia”.¹⁷ The Ministry was especially interested in the textile and wine industries. In particular, the Ministry wanted to know if “French wine manufacturers [were] interested in establishing a wine industry in Australia and [if they were] aware of the potentialities of such an industry in [Australia]”.¹⁸

In a memorandum by to the Department of External Affairs H. E. Holland argued “that the longer Australia [delayed] announcing a definite policy on migration [with France] the less chance it [would] have of securing the obvious benefits to be had from the admission of a communal cross-section”.¹⁹ If the document clearly expressed the desirability and advantages of setting up a formal migration agreement with France, it also foreshadowed the opposition that such an initiative would encounter from various French governments in the face of domestic underemployment.

Migration schemes

Despite the goodwill and the efforts displayed by the Australians, French emigration to Australia occurred rather sporadically in the decade following the Australian exhibition. An assisted passage scheme for British and United States ex-servicemen and their dependents was extended to ex-servicemen and resistance fighters from France in 1947 or 1948.²⁰ Ex-members of the Free French Forces (*Les Forces Françaises Libres*) had already been granted discretionary landing permits for Australia since early 1947 through Australia House in London.²¹ The Free French Ex-Servicemen’s Association was formed at that time in Australia to welcome French ex-servicemen and assist them to settle into the community. The scheme allowed 1,020 French-born persons to settle in Australia.²² At the same time, the Displaced Persons migration scheme, established through the International Refugees Organisation, allowed Australia to recruit potential migrants in France under special conditions. A Special Project migration programme also permitted building workers to be brought into Australia to support the housing industry. However, the general public would have to wait until 1960 for the opportunity to benefit from an assisted migration scheme.

Not quite the Promised Land...

¹⁷ NAA, A1066, E45/13/25, “European Affairs, Economic relations with France”, H. C. Coombs, 2 July 1945. Passage also cited in Stuer (1982).

¹⁸ NAA, A1066, E45/13/25, “European Affairs, Economic relations with France”, H. C. Coombs, 2 July 1945.

¹⁹ Flight Lieutenant Holland, RAAF, was in charge of the Paris exhibition. NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, “France: Migration to Australia”. H.E. Holland. 28 September 1945.

²⁰ See Note 3.

²¹ NAA, A1068, E47/13/6/6, F. Stuart, 22 January 1946.

²² NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, “France”.

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In July 1950, it was reported to the Australian Embassy in Paris that a number of French nationals who had recently migrated to Australia had complained to the French Consul General in Sydney that they “had been led to emigrate to Australia as a result of misleading statements” about the conditions of migration and settlement.²³ Canberra had no knowledge of any complaints emanating from any French migrants in regard to living and working conditions in Australia. However, Australian officials were careful to make sure that the French government had a “favourable impression on [Australia’s] present immigration arrangements and also of [Australia’s] willingness and ability to absorb in favourable circumstances large numbers of migrants from Western Europe”.²⁴ The eagerness of the Australian authorities to appease the French on any real or perceived issue relating to migrant dissatisfaction was prompted by an important upcoming conference of French, British and American experts to be hosted in Paris to discuss large-scale migration as a solution to unemployment in Europe.

Competing for migrants

In early 1951, tensions rose again between the two governments following a letter, dated 30 December 1950, that was sent by the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères to the Australian Embassy in Paris. At the centre of the French complaint were allegations that the Australian Migration Attaché had recruited 500 Displaced Persons from Central Europe who had already been specially selected by France for employment in France.²⁵ The Australian Embassy had only been allowed by the French to recruit in France migrants who had not been in continuous employment for more than four months with the same employer.²⁶ The Australians had overstepped their prerogatives and now feared that “there was a grave risk that [Australia] may be asked to close its Migration Office altogether, and so lose a number a good French settlers”.²⁷ The matter was settled amicably in February 1951, and no action was taken by France against Australia’s migration programme.

The Special Project Scheme for construction workers

Large-scale European migration to Australia after the war and a strong demand for accommodation resulted in an acute labour shortage in the housing industry. In order to alleviate the labour shortage, overseas workers could be brought to Australia to work on “special projects”, such as the construction of migrant housing. This study has not been able to determine how many French workers arrived in Australia under this scheme. However, correspondence between the French Embassy in Paris and the Department of Immigration in November 1951 pointed to two cases of French construction workers who

²³ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, “Australian Embassy”, 13 July 1950.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ This was in addition to the contingent of Displaced Persons in irregular employment and unsettlement in transit in France who had been selected by Australia.

²⁶ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, “Migration of Displaced Persons from France”, 18 January 1951.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

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were approved to work in Australia. The largest case identified concerns a contingent of 86 construction workers from France (and 64 additional workers from Italy) to work on the erection of prefabricated dwellings for the New South Wales Housing Commission. The second case was related to 20 French workers who were approved to work for the Housing Commission in Victoria. The scheme favoured the selection of single men, but married men prepared to travel ahead of their family could also be approved.²⁸ It is possible that the workers who came to Australia under the Special Project procedure contributed to the increase in French migrants numbers between 1950 and 1952.²⁹

Missed opportunities

After the heyday of the ex-servicemen's scheme, French migration to Australia consisted largely of Displaced Persons who went to Australia under the auspices of the International Refugees Organisation and of "Jewish tradesmen and their families, with few qualifications" who had contacts in Australia.³⁰ In 1953, a memorandum from the Australian Embassy in Paris informed the Department of Immigration that, as a result of the deterioration of the political situation in France,³¹ there had been a "notable increase" in the number of queries from French nationals who wished to migrate to Australia. Applicants were generally suitably qualified, particularly in agriculture and mechanical trades, as well as in the food and hospitality sectors, fields in high demand in Australia. Although in France the interest in migrating to Australia was substantial, the memorandum pointed out that the majority of applicants did not, however, have the required personal or professional contacts in Australia to sponsor their applications. In a period when Australia had no migration arrangement with France for civilians, lack of sponsorship made it virtually impossible for those applicants who did not have guarantors to be approved by the Australian immigration authorities. It is worth noting that despite strong demand, there were only 1,986 France-born arrivals in Australia between the financial years 1952-1953 and 1956-57; whereas in the previous period of 1949-1950 to 1951-1952, 5,022 France-born arrivals were recorded.

The coal and steel workers: a possible source of migrants

In 1956, as a result of the reorganisation of the coal and steel industry in France, which had to adhere to the requirements of the newly created Coal and Steel Community, approximately 1,800 French coal and steel worker were made redundant. The High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community stipulated that in the case of retrenchments due to the process of reforming the industry, unemployed workers would

²⁸ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, Cablegram from the Department of Immigration to the French Embassy in Paris, 27 November 1951.

²⁹ Figures supplied by the Department of Multicultural Affairs regarding France-born arrivals are as follows: financial years 1950-1951 = 2,285, 1951-1952 = 1,447. There are the highest in the decade.

³⁰ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, "Immigration from France", 1 October 1953.

³¹ The IVth République was punctuated with political crises. In the first half of 1953, several attempts to form a government failed. In August, there were severe strike movements in the public sector.

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be eligible for non-reimbursable assistance from the High Authority.³² The assistance package included unemployment indemnities, the financing of technical training, the reemployment of workers and allowances for resettlement expenses. The interesting point for Australia was that the location of the potential reemployment of these workers was not stipulated by the High Authority. The High Authority approached the Department of Immigration informally to alert them to the opportunity and to gauge their interest in the possibility of resettling the coal and steel workers in Australia. Although the Australians thought that “there should be an advantage in pursuing the matter”, they were concerned that the French might react negatively to the proposal.³³ It was decided that the High Authority would not be approached until the French position was known by the Australians. No document indicating the outcome of the discussions related to the French coal and steel workers was available in the file consulted.

The establishment of the General Passage Scheme in France

It was only in 1959 that concrete negotiations between the two countries took place to extend the G.A.P.S. to France. On 2 June, on his way to London, Alexander R. Downer, the Minister for Immigration, met informally with M. Philippe Monod³⁴ in Paris to propose the extension of the G.A.P.S. to France. M. Monod explained that as France was in full employment and did not have any population surplus, it would be “politically impossible to negotiate a migration agreement”.³⁵ Minister Downer expressed the view that “a small but steady flow of Frenchmen” would make an important contribution to Australia’s cultural, economic and industrial prospects. The French government was favourably impressed with Mr. Downer’s cultural argument and decided that, although France did not have a migration policy as such, it had no objection to the extension of the G.A.P.S. to French citizens.³⁶ However, although France did not object to Australia publicising the G.A.P.S., it did not look favourably on any active promotional campaign aimed at encouraging Frenchmen to migrate to Australia. In other words, France wished to be consulted about “any proposals by the Australian government to stimulate the migration of French citizens to Australia, such as a publicity drive, the opening of a Migration Office, etc.”³⁷ In a press statement released on 3 June 1959, Mr. Downer

³² General Report, 11 April 1955 - 8 April 1956 Article V.

³³ NAA, A1066, E45/13/39, “Immigration from France”, W. G. A. Landale, 12 July 1956.

³⁴ Director of Administrative and Social Affairs in the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.

³⁵ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, Memo from E. R. Walker (Australian Ambassador) to the Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 3 June 1959. The most important source of data consulted for this study, this record consists of a 218 page file containing immigration correspondence ranging between 1949 and 1968. The correspondence includes memos internal to the Department of Immigration and letters to and from the French Authorities as well as press clippings. The majority of the data contained in this file relates to the 1959-1962 period.

³⁶ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, Memo from E. R. Walker (Australian Ambassador) to the Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 2 October 1959.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

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declared:

[a]lthough I do not anticipate that there will be a great influx from France, should the French Government permit the scheme to operate, I believe it is of the utmost importance to Australia that we should spread the net over the widest possible field to good types of migrants.

(...)

If, in such countries as France and Belgium, we can sow the seeds of even a relatively small migration development, experience has shown that migration will build upon itself and, in turn, generate an ever-growing movement as relatives successfully established in Australia, encourage others to join them that [sic], briefly, is our objective in France.

As a result of my on-the-spot investigation in France, I am encouraged to believe that a useful flow of desirable types of French migrants can be stimulated.³⁸

The Scheme was introduced a year later, at the end of 1960, because the Australian Embassy in Paris needed time for adequate preparation, training of local staff, publication of informational material in French, and the arrival of specialised staff.³⁹ After it was introduced, the French programme was placed under the control of the Chief Migration Officer in The Hague.

“For thousands of Parisian women, happiness is Australia”⁴⁰

A report of the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council to the Minister of State for Immigration released in 1961 examined Australia’s then current and projected needs for migrants and made recommendations relative to the adequacy of current and future migration programmes. In particular, the report assessed Australia’s ability to attract migrants from traditional and non-traditional sources. France was among the European countries whose potential was examined. The report stated that the potential of France as a source of migrants was “being explored”. Although the report noted that Canada was a more attractive destination than Australia for the French due to its French speaking provinces, it stated that: “it may be possible for Australia to build up its intake of French migrants” (p. 61).

Following the publication of the report and eighteen months after the introduction of the G.A.P.S., Alexander R. Downer made another visit to Paris. On 6 June, he held a press conference that was followed by one television and two radio interviews. It was reported in *L’Echo du Centre*, a Belgian newspaper, that in the press conference Mr. Downer declared that 120,000 Australian men were unable to find wives because there were not enough women in Australia. Consequently, he invited Parisian women to go to

³⁸ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, Telegram from the Australian High Commission in London, 3 June 1959.

³⁹ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, Memo from E. R. Walker (Australian Ambassador) to the Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 16 November 1959.

⁴⁰ Title of an article that appeared in *L’Echo du Centre*, 15 June 1962.

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Australia, assuring them that “with an Australian man, [they would] be happy” because “Australian husbands loved their wives and were not jealous”.⁴¹ The press conference was also reported in six leading Parisian daily newspapers.⁴²

Mr. Downer’s encouraging declarations to the press were followed by a substantial increase in the number of queries from prospective migrants. At the end of June 1962, a memo from the Australian Embassy to the Department of External Affairs reported that it was impossible to keep up with the demand, as the Embassy had received 2,400 requests for information in three weeks.⁴³

The already strong interest in migrating to Australia was strengthened by the arrival in France of the French repatriates from Algeria, at the rate of 15,000 a day. In July 1962, a telegram from the Embassy warned that the volume of work for the immigration staff was such that “the programme [in France] [was] in serious danger of collapsing under its own weight unless authority to take on temporary additional staff [was] given urgently”.⁴⁴ A Migration Office that operated under the “benevolent tolerance”⁴⁵ of the French was subsequently opened in Paris in August 1962.

On 16 August 1962, an economic report published in France, analysing the labour shortage among the countries of the European Six, described France as the country least affected by the lack of manpower. There were three main reasons for this: 1) the strong post-war birth-rate experienced in France was starting to be felt on the labour market; 2) the ongoing repatriation of the French from Algeria had already strengthened the labour market by over 100,000 to 150,000 workers; and 3) France’s own immigration programme was successful. This prompted an Australian official to write “[i]f, as now seems increasingly likely, the attitude of France towards emigration is modified, this factor may well make France one of the more favourable countries of Europe for migration [to Australia] between now and 1970”.⁴⁶

The introduction of the G.A.P.S in France and Minister Downer’s enthusiastic comments to the press seemed to have little immediate impact on the flow of French migrants to Australia. In 1962-1963 only 293 France-born arrivals in Australia were recorded. However, the number of arrivals from France doubled in the following financial years.

The repatriates from Algeria

In 1961, the French government was already showing great concern about the fate of the

⁴¹ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, *L’Echo du Centre*, 15 June 1962, article by Leon Gillaux.

⁴² NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, Telegram from Australian Embassy in Paris to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 7 June 1962.

⁴³ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, Memo from the Australian Embassy in Paris to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 27 June 1962.

⁴⁴ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, 11 July 1962.

⁴⁵ The phrase appears in a document entitled “Migration arrangements with France”, 5 June 1970, NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*.

⁴⁶ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, “Immigration – France”, 21 August 1962.

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French in Algeria. Although there was a general consensus in France that the country should endeavour to absorb into the French economy the hundreds of thousands of Algerian French likely to be repatriated in a short period of time, the French were aware that the process of assimilation would be a difficult one. In 1961, it was generally accepted that a certain portion of the repatriate population might desire to settle outside of France. *Le Monde Diplomatique* stated that:

there [would] be, however, some [migrants] who, for psychological, political or economic reasons, [would] experience particular difficulties in settling in the life of the [French] nation. They [would] then perhaps consider settling into new countries where they would find economic structures corresponding better to their desires.⁴⁷

The dilemma posed by the issue of integration or emigration of the Algerian French repatriates was echoed in discussions that took place at the XVth session of the *Conseil Supérieur des Français de l'Étranger*.⁴⁸ M. Edmond Sauvageot, representative of the French in Germany, argued that, in the national interest of France, as many repatriates as possible needed to be resettled in the *métropole* because France needed manpower to progress economically in a dynamic Europe. While accepting the economic argument of M. Sauvageot, M. Marc Blancpain, Secrétaire Général of the Alliance Française, made a case for emigration by claiming that in a modern world many were those who chose to emigrate overseas. France should assist these migrants by informing them and by providing support in migrating countries. M. Blancpain added that history had shown that “a country without emigration [was] a country whose influence [was] dying”.⁴⁹

Faced with the difficulty of the integration into the economy of hundreds of thousands of French colonists from Algeria, the French government notified Australia in 1962 that it had no objection to Australian migration officials establishing contacts with repatriates' associations and promoting migration among their members. It also started to relax its position on direct migration advertising by allowing the Canadians to open a migration office and advertise their migration activities in Marseilles.

The Australians were well aware of the opportunity to attract migrants from among the flood of repatriates from Algeria. On 3 May 1962, Minister Downer was asked in the House of Representatives what steps had been taken to address “the considerable interest [shown] in the possibility of migration to Australia of French people in Algeria who (...) [did] not wish to go to metropolitan France”. Mr. Downer replied by saying that arrangements had been made for Immigration officers to visit Algiers, but it was too early to measure the effect of such an initiative. He was hopeful, he added, that Australia would benefit “by the acquisition of men with considerable skill, who would make valuable citizens of Australia in the future”. Minister Downer also pointed out that the

⁴⁷ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 7 décembre 1961, “Les Européens d'Algérie: les perspectives d'avenir en cas de solution du conflit”. My translation.

⁴⁸ 15-17 September 1961.

⁴⁹ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, “Conseil Supérieur des Français de l'Étranger”, September 1961.

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General Assisted Passage Scheme would also apply to French migrants from Algeria.⁵⁰

Despite ministerial good will, due to the logistical difficulty of recruiting in Algeria, the plan to attract Algerian French in Algeria was abandoned a few months later. Algerian French candidates for migration to Australia would have to apply once repatriated in France under the same conditions as metropolitan French candidates.⁵¹

In April 1964, the issue of the repatriate from Algeria was raised again when Monsignor Crennan, Director of the Federal Catholic Immigration Committee, made the suggestion to the Department of Immigration that Algerian French with experience in extensive farming could be suitable settlers on the land.⁵² After consultation with the State Governments, the Department of Immigration advised Monsignor Crennan that it would generally be difficult for intending migrants to be granted land in Australia. South Australia and the Northern Territory were not in a position to assist the settlement of migrants on the land. Victoria had strict regulations and, because of this, the prospect of migrants obtaining land in this state was not particularly good. Although land was available for extensive farming activities in Queensland, blocks of land were balloted for public competition. In addition, applicants had to be British subjects, possess three years of relevant farming experience, and have cash or convertible assets that met the minimum capital requirement for working the land. The prospective French Algerian migrants were unlikely to meet all three prerequisites. Opportunities existed in Western Australia where land was available in the Ord Irrigation area through the ballot system. The Western Australian Land Authorities suggested that details of available land be sent to French Algerian farmers wishing to migrate through the French Embassy. Again, because of the type of experience and the capital required, new migrants had little prospect of obtaining Crown Leases. However, established migrants with Australian experience would be regarded more favourably.

The visit of Minister Opperman to France

Mr. Hubert Opperman, who succeeded Mr. Downer as Minister for Immigration, visited Paris in June 1965 as part of a tour of 11 countries with migration links with Australia to discuss migration agreements and arrangements with Australia. He met with M. Grandval, the French minister of Labour, in order to inform France of developments in the Australian migration programme. Like his predecessor in 1962, Mr. Opperman gave an enthusiastic news conference, in which he announced that: "French people who wanted to migrate could choose no better country than Australia". He added that Australia would welcome all French rural workers, tradesmen and skilled workers alike.⁵³

⁵⁰ Parliamentary debates (Hansard), House of Representatives. Session 1962, Vol. H. of R. 35, p. 2006.

⁵¹ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10 PART 1, P. R. Heydon, 14 May 1962.

⁵² NAA, N1964, 75160, "French repatriates from North Africa, suggestion by Monsignor Crennan"

⁵³ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10, PART 1, cablegram, 5 June 1965.

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The visit of Monsignor Rochcau in Australia

Monsignor Georges Rochcau, Director of Migration at *Secours Catholique*, a French-based church organisation, was invited by the Department of Immigration to visit Australia in early 1968. In the aftermath of the war, *Secours Catholique* had been instrumental in resettling refugees and Displaced Persons in migrant-receiving countries, including Australia. In fact, it is estimated that during the G.A.P.S. years, as many 50% of assisted migrants coming from France (French and non-French guest-workers) had contact with *Secours Catholique* for the provision of complementary loans or for the facilitation of travel arrangements.⁵⁴

Monsignor Rochcau was personally well known to the Department of Immigration. He had collaborated with Australian officials on several occasions, particularly in relation to the resettlement of repatriates from Algeria in 1962 (see above). He was considered “an important ally” and “one of the most useful contacts in France” by the Department.⁵⁵ Because of the importance placed on his visit it was decided that all costs associated with his travel in Australia be met from the Department of Immigration publicity funds.⁵⁶

The purpose of Monsignor Rochcau’s visit was to see Australia’s immigration infrastructure first-hand in order to be able to advise “the large number of potential migrants he [was] in contact with in Paris”.⁵⁷ Between 29 February and 23 March 1968, Monsignor Rochcau visited Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, meeting with Department of Immigration and Department of Labour officials and Church leaders. He visited factories, migrant hostels and the migrant reception centre of Bonegilla. He was visibly impressed with what he saw in Australia. Following his stay in Australia, Monsignor Rochcau wrote a detailed report of his visit for the Department of Immigration. In the document he described the migrant reception infrastructure in Australia as being one of the best in the world. However, he identified three areas of difficulties for migrants: lack of access to public housing, lack of recognition of overseas qualifications, and unfamiliar social legislation. On his return to France, he also wrote an article entitled “Immigrants in Australia, shadows and light”, published in the May issue of *Messages du Secours Catholique*, a monthly periodical. The article, which appeared to be targeting potential migrants, echoed the positive and negative aspects of the Australian migration programme already detailed in Rochcau’s report to the Department of Immigration. Monsignor Rochcau’s visit had resulted in positive indirect publicity for the Australian migration programme.

In September 1968, a few months after Monsignor Rochcau’s visit, a report by the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council to the Minister of State for Immigration outlining the potential of migration from France was released. The Report stated that “[i]n the foreseeable future migration of French nationals [was] expected to increase

⁵⁴ NAA, A446/156, 1967/73084, “Visit of Monsignor Rochcau”, 6 February 1968.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ NAA, A446/156, 1967/73084, “Visit of Monsignor Rochcau”, letter from the Catholic Immigration Office to the Commonwealth Director of Immigration, 27 March 1968.

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moderately” (p. 57). It forecast that migration from France would reach 3,000 in the 1968/69 financial year, “with the possibility of further increase”. The report confirmed the continued interest that Australia had in France as a potential migrant source country.⁵⁸ In the financial year 1968-1969, 2,795 arrivals from France (including guest workers) were recorded.⁵⁹

Publicity in France must be increased

A public relations report released in January 1970 proposed an analysis of the Department of Immigration’s promotional activities in Britain and Europe. It stressed the need for increasing publicity campaigns supporting migration to Australia among migrant source countries such as France. The report stated that there was in France a growing awareness of Australia as well as an increase in the number of inquiries about migrating to Australia. However, despite the potential for expansion of migration from France, the report argued that the effort of the Commonwealth to promote Australia in France had been insufficient. At the time of the preparation of the report (presumably sometime in 1969), a ban on direct appeals to migration was in force in France. This restriction on direct promotion of Australia as a migrant destination had been a condition of the setting up of the Migration Office in Paris in 1962.⁶⁰ The Australian Embassy was restricted to showcasing Australia through “soft” indirect advertising campaigns in the written press and through cinema screenings (using the slogan “In Australia, life is easy”, in particular).⁶¹ However, it was noted in the report that word-of-mouth helped propagate the message among the French working community. The report recommended a more active publicity campaign among “foremen and skilled workers”, and “middle businessmen”. Below are some of the recommendations made by the authors of the report:

- To appoint a full-time Information Officer in Paris to promote and increase media coverage of Australian promotional material.
- To create “a more promotionally conscious relationship with French travel agents” (p. 65) who could be an important stage in the migrant recruitment process.
- To extend and increase the frequency of advertising.
- To better promote cultural and trade links between France and Australia.
- To involve Australian personalities living in France, such as John Konrads, in promoting Australia.
- To make documentary films presenting Australia to the French public.
- To facilitate interviewing procedures with potential migrants.
- To encourage French opinion leaders to visit Australia.⁶²

⁵⁸ Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council. (1968). *Australia’s immigration programme – Planning the future*. Reports to the Minister of State for Immigration.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ NAA, A1838, 25/1/3/10, PART 1, Cablegram, 15 February 1967.

⁶¹ While Canada advertised in the French armed forces magazine (International Public Relations, 1970: 63).

⁶² I have not found any documentation as to whether or not these recommendations were implemented.

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By making concrete recommendations to improve migration prospects, the Public Relations Report confirms the interest that Australia had in France as a source country for migrants in the early 1970s. The financial year 1969-1970 recorded 2,215 France-born arrivals in Australia. The number of settlers from France had been regularly increasing since 1963. If publicity in France could be encouraged, the prospects of migration from France would improve further.

The migration "accord" between the French and Australian governments

During a tour a Europe in July 1969, Mr Billy Snedden, Minister for Immigration, met the French Minister for Labour and Population in Paris. Although the French made it clear that they were not prepared to assist the Australians in their migration activities in France, the French minister believed that an "accord" defining the entitlements of the French citizens living and working in Australia could be beneficial to both countries.⁶³ It was agreed from the outset that the "accord" would not be a "migration agreement of the classic type".⁶⁴ The French, in line with their policy in regard to emigration, had never signed such an agreement with any country and they were not about to do so with Australia. The document would take the shape of an arrangement between the two countries. Its aim would be to clarify the social and professional situation of the French in Australia, not to promote migration from France.⁶⁵

The Australians tended to be in favour of a bi-lateral *agreement* because such a document would have to be publicised. It would attract public attention in France and therefore encourage the Australian migration programme. Also, by spelling out the rights and obligations of the French citizens in Australia, such a public document would allow them to fend off on-going criticisms and complaints reported in the press relative to the misfortune of a number of French nationals who had recently migrated to Australia.⁶⁶ The French, on the other hand, preferred to opt for a confidential *exchange of notes*. In other words, they were not interested in a legally binding document that would lead them to acknowledge the promotion of migration by the Australians in France. This would have been in contradiction with the views that they had held on French emigration since the war. Not only did they not want the "accord" to be made public, but they seemed to be reluctant to accept any responsibility for problems encountered by French nationals who had undertaken to migrate overseas.⁶⁷

⁶³ NAA, "Migration arrangements with France" (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), 8 January 197; and NAA, *Migration agreement with France* (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), "Summary of negotiations for migration agreement with France, 25 August 1971.

⁶⁴ NAA, *Migration agreement with France* (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), "Proposed statement of policy concerning the residence and employment of French citizens in Australia.", 17 August 1970.

⁶⁵ NAA, *Migration agreement with France* (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), 19 September 1969.

⁶⁶ NAA, *Migration agreement with France* (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), "French migration to Australia", 23 July 1971; and NAA, *Migration agreement with France* (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), "Migration agreement with France", 26 August 1971.

⁶⁷ NAA, *Migration agreement with France* (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1), "Migration 'accord' with France", 11 October 1971.

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A draft document entitled *Statement of policy concerning the residence and employment of French citizens in Australia* was prepared in April 1970.⁶⁸ The Statement was short and was expressed in general terms (“to avoid any implication on the part of Australia”).⁶⁹ It was an affirmation that the French residing in Australia would share equal status with Australian citizens and other migrant groups in most areas of civil and professional life. Initially the French responded positively to the draft proposal. However, they raised two major points of contention: the military obligations of the French citizens and the recognition of French qualifications in Australia. Although the draft “Statement of policy” made a number of provisions for both matters, the French argued that the Vocational qualification clause only extended the recognition of some trades and not others. Furthermore, the French found it difficult to acknowledge the right of another country to call up their citizens for military service when France did not call up Aliens residing in France.⁷⁰

In the next eighteen months, the French and the Australians tried to find a basis for the so-called “accord” without making much progress.⁷¹ The French had initiated the negotiations for an “accord” in 1969; however, by 1971, they had clearly lost interest in any type of arrangement. By October 1971, the French had reached the conclusion that “there was not a mutually advantageous basis for an exchange at this time”⁷² because whatever form the arrangement took, in the end it would be regarded in France as a migration agreement. In fact, the question of publicity was at the heart of the “accord”. As far as the French were concerned, the publicity given to such a document was a political non-sense. For Australia, the very point of working towards such an agreement was precisely to be able to publicise the migration programme in France with the French government’s endorsement.⁷³ The attempt to set up the “accord” was symptomatic of the difficulties encountered by Australia in pushing the migration programme in France. As had happened several times before, Australia had come up against the same reserved attitude that the French officials had been displaying ever since the end of the war towards Australia’s efforts to promote migration in France.

⁶⁸ NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*, “Proposed ‘Accord’ between Australia and France on the residence and employment of French citizens in Australia”, 3 April 1970.

⁶⁹ NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*, “Proposed ‘accord’ with France on the residence and employment of French citizens in Australia”, 8 August 1971.

⁷⁰ NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*, “Migration from France”, 5 June 1971.

⁷¹ NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*, “Migration arrangement with France”, 22 June 1970.

⁷² NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*, “Migration ‘accord’ with France”, 11 October 1971.

⁷³ NAA, *Migration agreement with France (A1838, 1634/6/2, Part 1)*, “Migration arrangements with France”, 5 June 1970.

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Conclusion

Based on immigration records and diplomatic correspondence, this study has identified and documented in detail a number of events that shaped the history of French migration to Australia from the end of World War II to the early 1970s. The study has determined the following sequence of events:

The impetus of post-war French migration to Australia was given by the 1945 Australian exhibition in Paris; a modest event that did not intend to promote migration, but which ended up acting as a catalyst for the interest that the French public would display towards Australia.

The 1950s started under the auspices of a substantial demand in France for migrating to Australia. However, for most of the decade the French emigration flow was restricted by the absence of a migration arrangement with France. During these years, the cost of expatriation to Australia was high and therefore limited to those who could afford it and who had established contacts in the country of destination.

The 1960s saw the advent of two general migration schemes available to the French public. The G.A.P.S, however, did not appear to produce the influx of migrants it intended to generate; this, in spite of a sustained demand for migration in France and several promotional visits by senior Australian ministers. The crisis in Algeria and the subsequent social instability that followed the repatriation of the Algerian French in the early 1960s may have prompted many intending migrants from France to cancel or delay their plans to travel to Australia. Other migrants may have preferred to go to Canada instead.

The S.P.A.P. years of the late 1960s to early 1970s were the most profitable ones in terms of French influx into Australia. Interest in Australia was strong and supported by “soft” advertising campaigns orchestrated by the Paris Migration Office. It was also helped by the visit to Australia of key personalities such as Monsignor Rochcau. However, despite the growing number of French migrants settling in Australia (and also possibly because of it), Australia’s attempt to formulate a bilateral migration agreement in the early 1970s was not successful.

Is the history of post-war French migration to Australia a story of failed migration? It is difficult to say. However, this research has shed light on the ambiguous nature of the diplomatic relations between France and Australia on the issue of French migration. The terms of the equation underlying the relations between the two countries may be put as follows: a) After the war, Australia needed Northern and Western European migrants to build up a cross-section of European migration. b) Australia saw France, an allied nation, as a country that could produce skilled migrants who could contribute effectively to Australian society. Such migrants could create opportunities for trade. c) However, because of post-war endemic underemployment, France had no intention of entering into a migration agreement of any kind; this despite a sustained demand for migration to Australia from the French general population.

The archival evidence presented in this article indicates that for over 25 years Australian Immigration officials did attempt to build up migration from France. They persevered, although always cautiously, in trying to establish a formal migration agreement with France. Such an agreement would have allowed them to promote widely and openly the two assisted migration schemes extended to France in the 1960s. France,

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in line with its national policy of economic expansion, always refused to encourage publicly its citizens to migrate because emigration would have been impossible to justify in the context of strong demand for domestic and foreign labour in France. Since Australia's migration activities were only *benevolently* tolerated by the French, any substantial and sustained migration flow from France was simply impossible to generate.

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