



Ben Dokter

Born in 1925 in Chaam, North Brabant. During the latter part of World War II, he was deported to Germany.

Ben Dokter, his wife Margaret and their four sons arrived in Australia in 1956. "...when we arrived in Sydney, Margaret was diagnosed with acute gall bladder trouble, but we had to continue our travel to Brisbane, another 1,000km further north. The train trip from Sydney to Brisbane with a sick wife and four children, one only four-months old was horrendous. The train was not air-conditioned and had only wooden benches. Food or drinks were not available.

When we arrived in Brisbane on 1 November 1956, my wife was immediately transferred to hospital for an operation, while our four children and I were transferred to the Wacol Migrant Camp. For the first time in my life, I felt miserable; what had I done to my family? Here we were in a hot climate, living in a camp, wife in hospital, and no special accommodation for the children. I wished



WACOL REMEMBERED

Country of Birth: **The Netherlands**

Date of Arrival in Australia: **November 1956**

that I could go back to Holland and undo all the things, which I had done.

Luckily after three to four weeks, everything became more normal. I started working as a tram conductor, Margaret became well again and the children went to school. The sun started to shine again. In 1958, we were blessed with a daughter to complete the family. Arthur Caldwell [sic] who was Minister of Immigration at that time, visited Wacol and I spoke to him for about an hour about the conditions in the camp. He asked Jim Keeffe, later Senator Keeffe to take care of me. I was introduced to Senator Mac Poulter and Professor Hughes who educated me for a year at the Labor College on the ins and outs of politics. Bill Hayden was a fellow student at that course."

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