Country of Birth: **The Netherlands**
Date of Arrival in Australia: **1970**

Lily
nee Kuiper **Podger**

Our family, all seven of us, migrated from Bennekom in Gelderland in 1970... I was 11 and had never heard of Australia or kangaroos.

On the ship *Australis* to Australia, my parents changed their mind about going to Melbourne, I think because of the rumours about the extremes of weather in that city. Therefore, we went on to Sydney, where we disembarked instead, and boarded a rickety train to Brisbane. That trip took about 24 hours and the train was full of other migrant families with wailing children who had the measles. My sister Mieke was the first to set foot on Australian soil in Fremantle. To me that was more significant than crossing the equator. It was a bit like setting foot on the moon.

My brother Jon (changed from Jan) and I went to Goodna Primary School. I found learning rather easy there compared to what I was used to. Back in Holland, I had seen a picture of some school uniforms worn in Australia. It was a bit of an eye-opener. I rather fancied the wide brimmed straw hat but found in fact few hats and mostly no shoes either. A fair percentage of children didn't have a school uniform at all.

The schoolroom we were in was 100 years old and had big posts in the middle of the classroom, supporting the second storey. These posts were quite handy as a place to stand behind when everyone in class was saying the Lord's Prayer and I didn't have a clue of the words.

My teacher wore clearly a wig and we had to read "Dick and Dora" (I was supposed to be in Grade 7 but I was in a special class for non-English speaking students) and we were bored stiff.

After a while, having to write numbers as words such as "one thousand three hundred and sixty-nine", *ad infinitum* and the French boy repeatedly throwing scrunched paper balls at me, my mother requested some sort of tests, to explore whether I could go to High School.

I was admitted to High School and soon I was studying the Periodic table and how many electrons whizzed around each atom. I ended up in the same Grade as my sister Mieke but somehow I never managed to get my own identity at school. I was always 'Mieke's sister'. My name was actually Caroline but when I left school, aged 16, and went to the University of Queensland, I decided to make a clean break and change my name to 'Lily', which was really my first name.

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