

From the National Archives of Australia (NAA) Research document – Dutch Immigration History

[More people imperative Immigration to Australia 1901–1939](#)

Prime Minister's Department, 'Immigration Restrictions. Dutch' [1.5 cm, 1935– 39] A461, P349/3/5

This file relates to negotiations on Dutch migration to Australia between the Consul General of The Netherlands and the Commonwealth Government from 1937 to 1939, given a spur through a visit by the Minister for Commerce, Dr Earle Page in 1938.

The views of the Dutch government are set out in two memoranda which emphasise that the migration movement would be small and gradual, consisting of selected migrants. The Netherlands government asked whether the normal landing money for 'aliens' could be reduced from £200 to £50 if guarantees were given by the Netherlands Emigration Foundation (a semi-official body).

Cabinet approval was sought and the encouragement of Dutch migrants was agreed upon on 8 April 1938 under certain conditions. The Salvation Army was also permitted to introduce migrants from Holland for farm or domestic work, the Army to be responsible for their reception, placement and aftercare, and for the repatriation of unsuitable migrants. Concern was expressed that the reduced landing money concessions given to Dutch and Danish immigrants might be claimed by Italy, in view of the 1883 commercial treaty between Great Britain and Italy which was binding on the commonwealth. (A draft circular for Cabinet on White Alien Immigration, Landing Money requirements, 1938, is included.)

The ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions) in July 1938 questioned the encouragement of Dutch agricultural workers and skilled artisans, including metal workers of all classes, and a deputation followed.

With the approval of the Dutch government, A AW Fransen Van de Putte was sent to Australia by the Netherlands Emigration Foundation in October 1938 to investigate the possibilities for the absorption of Dutch migrants in Australia. The Foundation agreed to select farmers and farm labourers, and later skilled artisans, according to moral character, physical fitness and suitability for life in Australia. Jews would not be accepted.

Steps were then taken to establish an organisation in Australia to find employment and accommodation for Dutch migrants, give maintenance guarantees and repatriate unsuitable settlers within one year. Several letters in the file refer to a proposal to settle Dutch people on the Struan Estate in the South-East of South Australia.

There is also a proposal from P R Jackson, Secretary, St. Mary's Cathedral, Perth, dated December 1938, to settle a number of Dutch Catholic families, with capital of at least £600 per family, on swampy areas adjoining Perth. Jackson argued that any problems of assimilation would be overcome since the settlement would not be isolated but close to a large centre of population. Letters from and about individual Dutch migrants, press cuttings, and Hansard extracts are also included in the file.

National Archives of Australia Ethnic and Religious Groups February 1999 103 Dutch Prime Minister's Department, 'Immigration Restrictions. Dutch' [1.5 cm, 1935– 39] A461, P349/3/5

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(the rest is now a duplication of the text in the file above, it is left in as it is in the original file)

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