

# The Geopolitical Patterns of Colonial and Australian Immigration Restriction Laws and the Negative Impact on Australian Trade with Asia, 1788 – 1936

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The White Australia Policy is the indispensable condition of every other Australian policy.<sup>1</sup>

In the nineteenth century migrants from the United Kingdom to Australia brought a form of British nationalism with them that subsequently merged with what Benedict Anderson has called “a wide variety of political and ideological constellations.”<sup>2</sup> The majority of these migrants brought with them some understanding of natural law, the social contract, the separation of powers, and that all humans were capable of improvement. These were new and important ideas that could assist them to understand other races from different continents and cultures. Despite most colonists’ widespread belief in the benefits of the Enlightenment’s social, political and scientific advances, colonial and later Australian immigration restriction policies comprehensively excluded all non-white and Asian races from entering Australia until the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> As Professor Keith Hancock’s quote makes plain, immigration restriction, or the White Australia Policy<sup>4</sup> (WAP) was indispensable and indeed, the foundation of Australia’s regional and foreign policies in ways that we simply take for granted

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<sup>1</sup> W.K. Hancock, *Australia*, Brisbane and Melbourne: Jacaranda Press, 1961 ed. (London: Ernest Benn, 1930; repr., Jacaranda, 1961, 1964, 1966), 59. Some of the historians who have commented on Hancock’s assertion include A.P. Elkin, “Re-Thinking the White Australia Policy,” *The Australian Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1945): 6-34. Russell McGregor, *Environment, Race and Nationhood in Australia: Revisiting the Empty North* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan imprint published by Springer Nature, 2016). Ross McKibbin, “The Political Cultures of Australia and Britain: How Alike Were They?,” in *Australia and the World: A Festschrift for Neville Meaney* J. Beaumont and M. Jordan (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2013) <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=ccj8j9wl3b0C> 11 November 2016. Sean Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America, 1919-1978*, ed. Ann McGrath Modern History Series (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Sixth impression, 1990 ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1983), 13-14, 122.

<sup>3</sup> There were exceptions as evidenced by the colonial naturalization legislation. Further, colonial governors and External Affairs and Immigration Ministers were empowered to grant exemptions. Persons or classes of persons exempted under the various restriction acts included merchants, students, diplomatic and consular personnel and other entrants who could prove previous residence or other special circumstances. For example, NSW, *An Act to amend the Act relating to the Naturalization of Aliens*, 17 VICT No. 9, (8 July 1853). See also NSW, *An Act to amend the Law Relating to Aliens* 39 VICT No. 19, (Reserved 29 June 1875). For Commonwealth naturalization and exemption provisions see *An Act relating to Naturalization*, No. 11 of 1903 (13 October 1903). A2863 1910/10 PART 1 Immigration Restriction Act 1910 - Part 1 1898-1910, Attorney-General Main Correspondence files [228341]

<http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=228341> 5 October 2016 Folio 225.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase “White Australia” was used from the mid-1890s. Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1923; repr., London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1967), 99. The two phrases ‘White Australia’ and ‘immigration restriction’ will be used interchangeably throughout the article to describe colonial and Australian immigration policies.

today.<sup>5</sup> The WAP also had negative implications for Australian trade. The first part of this paper will survey the ways in which colonial immigration restriction legislation informed and laid the basis for the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act and the Pacific Island Labourers Act in 1901. This will be followed by a brief introduction to the discipline of geopolitics, which emerged contemporaneously with the WAP. Geopolitics provides a spatial, geographic and historical context to observe the development of immigration restriction in the Australian region. Specifically, the geopolitical context included Australia's fear of Asian races, the rise of Japan as a Great Power and the remnants of European imperialism in the Pacific. The final part of the paper uses the framework of immigration restriction and geopolitics to conclude with an analysis of how trade with Asia was severely impeded as early as 1800, thus extending the authority of Hancock's observations on immigration policy well into the colonial period and the commercial domain more generally. The conclusion highlights Australia's geostrategic and economic dilemma in the 1930s: how to balance the nation's security, inextricably linked with Britain, and the trade relationship with Japan, Australia's second most valuable trading partner and most feared potential enemy in the Pacific.

### **Survey of Colonial and Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Laws**

Colonial immigration restriction began in 1855 with Victoria's enactment of legislation "to make provision for certain Immigrants", principally to exclude Chinese.<sup>6</sup> In subsequent years, similar acts were passed and amended by South Australia (1857), New South Wales (NSW, 1861, 1881, 1898), Queensland (1877, 1884), Western Australia (1886) and Tasmania (1877). In all instances, the colonies used a variety of disincentives such as "the carrier sanction", poll taxes, permits and

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<sup>5</sup> Hancock, *Australia*, vii-viii, 59-63.

<sup>6</sup> Victoria, *An Act to Make Provision for Certain Immigrants*, 18 Vict. No. 1855 No. 39 of 1855, (12 June 1855). See also the following reference for a compendium of colonial immigration restriction legislation: Great Britain. Foreign Office, *Correspondence Relating to Chinese Immigration into the Australasian Colonies, with a Return of Acts Passed by the Legislatures of Those Colonies and of Canada and British Columbia on the Subject* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1888). NSW, *An Act to Regulate and Restrict the Immigration of Chinese* 25 VICT. No. 3 (22 November 1861). NSW, *An Act to Restrict the Influx of Chinese into New South Wales*, 45 VICT. No. 11 (6 December 1881).

residence fees to deter Chinese and other Asian races from entering Australia.<sup>7</sup> The use of sanctions against carriers meant severe fines for ship owners, charterers, or masters if they carried Chinese to Australia that exceeded a specific tonnage formula. For example, the 1855 Victorian act imposed a fine on ships' masters for numbers that exceeded one Chinese person every ten tons of the ship's tonnage.<sup>8</sup> Colonial legislation restricting the entry of Chinese did not become completely effective until all the colonies had enacted similar laws, thus preventing overland entry from other colonies.<sup>9</sup>

In 1901 the new Commonwealth of Australia drew on the extant colonial immigration statutes, a formidable constellation of restrictive racial laws to enact the Immigration Restriction Act and the Pacific Island Labourers Act, the first immigration and foreign policy instruments of the new nation.<sup>10</sup> Australians were intent on possessing a continent peopled by white British subjects, a term which then included all peoples of any race born in British dominions and colonies.<sup>11</sup> So determined were Australians to exclude other races that they were "willing to forgo trade advantages that might have afforded them a foothold" in Asia.<sup>12</sup> The colonial and later Commonwealth approach to immigration and race caused diplomatic embarrassment and occasional outright hostility to Britain.<sup>13</sup> While a colonial governor or the Governor-General could reserve any Australian legislation for review and final approval by Britain if he believed it exceeded the powers of the relevant parliament, this rarely occurred.<sup>14</sup> Britain preferred to advise and suggest alternatives and by 1901 a tested and

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Lee, "Anti-Chinese Legislation in Australasia," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 3, no. 2 (1889): 218-220. Kathryn Cronin, "Controlling Immigration: Australian Legislation and Practice," *Australian Law Reform Commission-Reform Journal* 19, no. 75 (1999): 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Victoria Chinese Immigration Act 1855* 18 Vict. No. 1855. No. 39 of 1855, s. III.

<sup>9</sup> Cronin, "Controlling Immigration," 7.

<sup>10</sup> *An Act to Place Certain Restrictions on Immigration and to Provide for the Removal from the Commonwealth of Prohibited Immigrants*, 1 EDWARD VII No. 17 of 1901, (Assent 23 December 1901). Australia, *An Act to provide for the Regulation, Restriction, and Prohibition of the Introduction of Labourers from the Pacific Islands and for other purposes*, 1 EDWARD VII No. 16 of 1901, (Assent 17 December 1901).

<sup>11</sup> John Quick and Robert Garran, *The Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth* (Sydney; Melbourne; London: Angus & Robertson; Melville & Mullen; The Australian Book Company, 1901), 11, 478, 599. For a historical comparison of citizenship criteria see Dieter Gosewinkel, *Nation and Citizenship from the Late Nineteenth Century Onwards: a Comparative European Perspective* European Parliament Committee on Constitutional Affairs (2008)[PE 408.302] [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2008/408302/IPOL-AFCO\\_NT\(2008\)408302\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2008/408302/IPOL-AFCO_NT(2008)408302_EN.pdf) 31 August 2017.

<sup>12</sup> J.W. Root, *The Trade Relations of the British Empire*, Second, 1904 ed. (Liverpool: J.W. Root, 1903), 49-50.

<sup>13</sup> Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1901-23: Australia and World Crisis 1914 - 1923*, vol. 2 (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009), 72, 319.

<sup>14</sup> UK, *An Act to Remove Doubts as to the Validity of Colonial Laws*, 28 & 29 Victoriae, Cap. 63 CAP. LXIII, (29 June 1865). Enid Campbell, "Colonial Legislation and the Laws of England," *University of Tasmania Law Review* 3, no. 2 (1965): 148-149. See also W. Harrison Moore's comprehensive history of the act and his advice to the Commonwealth

effective formula for immigration restriction had been refined. This included the dictation test adopted from the South African province of Natal and a closely supervised bureaucratic regime that was overseen personally from the Prime Minister down. As Edmund Barton reminded customs and immigration officers, “the law does not insist that every intending immigrant should be asked to complete the dictation test ... tact and judgment” were to be exercised in the selection of candidates. “Exactitude in spelling and punctuation” was not required “but the writer must show that he is fairly conversant with the language selected.”<sup>15</sup>

As a condition, the WAP was the most important “circumstance affecting the functioning or existence”<sup>16</sup> of Australia’s foreign policies and geopolitical outlook. From a contemporary legal perspective, the absence of the WAP or its non-performance would prejudice and cause loss to Australia; conversely, Australians believed the policy’s success would confer commodity and advantage on the nation.<sup>17</sup> As Justice Isaacs noted in 1926, the annulment or weakening of the WAP would “seriously weaken other legislative powers, such as the customs, commerce and aliens [powers].” The WAP would also “safeguard the ethnic, social and industrial conditions of the people.”<sup>18</sup> Isaacs’ view was couched in the accepted judicial language of the day and the Australian public firmly supported his views.<sup>19</sup>

The work of several historians on early colonial immigration, race, and the Enlightenment reveals that most colonists accepted a world view that emphasised “the unity of all humankind”, the expectation of government protection and recourse to some rights.<sup>20</sup> Early political theorists believed

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on the further inapplicability of its provisions in A4311 376/1 Report of the Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation and Merchant Shipping Legislation, 1929 together with Report of Sir Wm. Harrison Moore 1929, Cumston Collection [30054566] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=30054566> 3 July 2015 Folios 11-15.

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Barton, To Officer under the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, January 1902, in J3116 1 Alien Immigration - SS Guthrie - circular from External Affairs giving officers direction on how to administer the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 1899-1902 External Affairs [5058053] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=5058053> 16 July 2015 Folio 11.

<sup>16</sup> J.M. Hughes, P.A. Mitchell, and W.S. Ramson, *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, ed. R.E. Allen, Second, 1992 ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Newman Mozley, *Mozley and Whiteley's Law Dictionary*, ed. Leonard H. West and F.G. Neave, Second London: Butterworths, 1904 ed. (London and Melbourne: Butterworths; George Robertson, 1876).

<sup>18</sup> *Williamson v Ah On*, 39 (1926) CLR 95, 103.

<sup>19</sup> "White Australia: Bishop Stephen's Views," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 1926.

<sup>20</sup> John Gascoigne and Patricia Curthoys, *The Enlightenment and the Origins of European Australia* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 148. Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia: A History*, 2014 ed., vol. 2 Democracy (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997). Andrew Markus, *Australian Race Relations, 1788-1993*

fear was an important organisational factor in society and a strong motivating force to compel humans to conclude the social contract.<sup>21</sup> It was fear of attack from enemies that drove “kingdoms [to] guard their coasts and frontiers with forts and castles.”<sup>22</sup> In exchange for the surrender of some liberties to the government, whatever form that government might take (monarchy, democracy or another variant), the government agreed to guarantee protection of the individual’s life and property.<sup>23</sup> It was also important to define the extent of a government’s legislative powers and to ensure a separation of the legislative and executive branches of government.<sup>24</sup> Significantly, the sovereign’s protection also extended to defence against aggression perpetrated by other nations.<sup>25</sup> When combined, all of the above tenets form the social contract, which remains extant in society today.

In 1788, English common and statute law accompanied the First Fleet to Australia and the social contract was implicit in Governor Arthur Phillip’s commission.<sup>26</sup> By 1833, Britain had abolished slavery, but the implied understanding of European superiority, even if only as a guiding light to other races, continued as an undercurrent throughout the white settler colonies.<sup>27</sup> Andrew Markus and Matthew Jordan believe that this superiority had not yet assumed a negative racial tone. But Australia’s changing geopolitical circumstances throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced new beliefs about immigration that drew on “political, social and

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Australian Experience (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994). Matthew Jordan, "Rewriting Australia's Racist Past: How Historians (Mis)Interpret the 'White Australia' Policy," *History Compass* 3, no. 1 (2005): 7. On Grotius see also Hans Kohn, "The Nature of Nationalism," *The American Political Science Review* 33, no. 6 (1939): 1001.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. Sir William Molesworth, vol. II: Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society (London: John Bohn, 1841), 12-3.

<sup>22</sup> Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes II*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes II*, xvii-xviii, 13. See also Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes's Leviathan: Reprinted from the Edition of 1651*, ed. William George Pogson-Smith, 1909 ed. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1651; repr., Impression, 1929), 74. Gascoigne and Curthoys, *The Enlightenment*, 5. John Locke, *Two Treatises on Civil Government: Preceded by Sir Robert Filmer's "Patriarcha"* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Limited, 1903), 79, Section 133, 260; Sections 187-188, 234-235.

<sup>24</sup> Locke, *Two Treatises*, Section 134, 260-261; Section 143, 267-268.

<sup>25</sup> Hobbes, *Hobbes's Leviathan*, 136, 138. Locke, *Two Treatises*, Section 146, 268.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Watson, ed. *Historical Records of Australia Series I. Governors' Despatches to and from England*, vol. I. 1788 - 1796 (Sydney: The Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1914), 2-8. Gascoigne and Curthoys, *The Enlightenment*, 44. Gascoigne quotes Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England: In Four Books*, ed. Richard Burn and John Williams, 1777 ed. Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature No. 13296. (London: A. Strahan, T. Cadell and D. Prince, 1771). See also Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books by Sir William Blackstone*, 1859; 1893 ed., vol. I Books I & II (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1753), 108.

<sup>27</sup> UK, *An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies; for Promoting the Industry of the manumitted Slaves; and for compensating the Persons hitherto entitled to the Services of such Slaves*, 3 & 4 Will.4 c.73 (1 August 1834). Gascoigne and Curthoys, *The Enlightenment*, 148.

cultural attitudes towards race.”<sup>28</sup> In particular, industrialisation, rapid modernisation and a fluid geopolitical landscape in the Pacific fostered a rising sense of Australian nationalism.

Neville Meaney and Helen Irving point to nationalism as a catalyst for colonial Australians to federate, particularly in their search for refuge from the social trauma and uncertainty imbued by modernisation and industrialisation.<sup>29</sup> But “nationality is inconceivable without the ideas of popular sovereignty” being first established in a people’s hearts and minds.<sup>30</sup> By mid-nineteenth century, the ideas of the social contract and the consent of the people through a franchise had already been received in Australia. Indeed, there has been a strong movement for an elected legislature from the 1820s, which culminated in the NSW New Constitution Act in 1853.<sup>31</sup>

### **Survey of South East Asia and South West Pacific Geopolitical Conditions**

The writings of colonial and Australian policy makers, political figures and academics reveal a hierarchy of geopolitical views which included the world, the British Empire and the Pacific region. They observed international and Imperial transactions through the criteria of race, geography, defence, trade, politics, the national interest and culture. Their geopolitical observations and assessments informed a nascent colonial foreign policy.<sup>32</sup> Yet in the practice of Imperial foreign policy, Britain accepted or rejected colonial advice in accordance with the interests of the Empire.

Queensland’s proximity to New Guinea and the South Pacific resulted in one of the most striking foreign policy measures attempted by a colonial government. In April 1883 Queensland Premier Thomas McIlwraith learned that German newspapers and merchants were urging German

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<sup>28</sup> Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, 55-56. Jordan, "Rewriting Australia's Racist Past," 7.

<sup>29</sup> Neville Meaney, "The End of 'White Australia' and Australia's Changing Perceptions of Asia, 1945–1990," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (1995): 174. Neville Meaney, *Under New Heavens: Cultural Transmission and the Making of Australia* (Port Melbourne: Heinemann Education Australia, 1989), 393. Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution*, 1999 ed. Studies in Australian History (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 101, 103.

<sup>30</sup> Kohn, "Nationalism," 1001.

<sup>31</sup> Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia*, 62. NSW, *An Act to Confer a Constitution on New South Wales and to Grant a Civil List to Her Majesty* 17 VIC. 1853 No. 41, (Reserved 22 December 1853).

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas John Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, ed. Helen R. Nicholl (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944), 7, 6.

Chancellor Otto von Bismarck to annex New Guinea.<sup>33</sup> McIlwraith immediately responded by taking possession of eastern New Guinea on behalf of the British Empire.<sup>34</sup> Prior to the annexation, McIlwraith had been concerned about the security of trade in the Torres Strait, the potential threat posed by escaped convicts from New Caledonia, the rapid development of pearl and other fisheries, and his perceived “inadequacy of the [British South Pacific’s] High Commissionership.”<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey Blainey has suggested that McIlwraith acted with such haste in order to secure the British India Steam Navigation Company’s route through the Torres Strait from any future German competition.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the German Reichstag had recently debated the introduction of a South Pacific Steamship Line, which would operate in New Guinean waters.<sup>37</sup> McIlwraith’s unilateral action was condemned by Britain, which viewed the annexation as outside the constitutional powers of the colony. The British assured the colonists that no foreign power sought control of New Guinea.<sup>38</sup> These assurances did little to allay the fears of Australians.

The contemporary German historian Leopold von Ranke noted that “nations themselves are not entirely natural creations ... not so much the products of their own land and race as results of

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<sup>33</sup> Commonwealth Statistician, Census Bulletin No. 4. Territory of Papua, in A2218 25 Pacific Islands Printed Papers 1897-1923 Pacific Islands Prime Minister (4 April 1921) [148059]

<http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=148059> 5 April 2015 Folio 69.

<sup>34</sup> Commonwealth Statistician, "A2218 25 Pacific Islands" 148059 Folios 68-70. Roger C. Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1980), 51. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Samoan Tangle: A Study in Anglo-German-American Relations, 1878-1900* (Brisbane and Dublin: University of Queensland Press; Irish University Press, 1974), 32. Mary Evelyn Townsend, *Origins of Modern German Colonialism 1871 - 1885* Studies in History, Economics and Public Law vol XCVIII (New York and London: Longmans, Green & Co.; P.S. King & Son, Ltd., 1921), 162-3. Richard Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 67. Marjorie G. Jacobs, "Bismarck and the annexation of New Guinea," *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 5, no. 17 (1951): 15, 18. At the same time McIlwraith also annexed New Britain, New Ireland, the Islands of Trobriand, D'Entrecasteaux, and the Louisiade archipelago! Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1901-23*, 2009 ed., vol. 1 The Search for Security in the Pacific (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), 18.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Jenks, *A History of the Australasian Colonies* (Cambridge: University Press, 1912), 312.

<sup>36</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1966; repr., 1982), 219.

<sup>37</sup> Townsend, *German Colonialism*, 176. Irmeline Veit-Brause, "Australia and Germany in the Pacific: Aspects of the 'New Imperialism'," in *The German Empire and Britain's Pacific Dominions, 1871-1919* John A. Moses and Christopher Pugsley (Claremont, CA.: Regina Books, 2000), 311. John Root notes that the heavily subsidised North German Lloyd Company began carrying wool to Europe from Australia in 1885, thus saving the importers commissions and transhipment costs in London. Root, *Trade Relations*, 53-4, 63.

<sup>38</sup> S.S. Mackenzie, *The Australians at Rabaul: The Capture and Administration of the German Possessions in the Southern Pacific*, 7th ed. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1939), 2. See also: Paul W. Van der Veur, *Search for New Guinea's Boundaries from Torres Strait to the Pacific* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1966), 15. Peter Scratchley and C. Kinloch Cooke, *Australian Defences and New Guinea: Compiled from the Papers of the Late Major-General Sir Peter Scratchley, R.E., K.C.M.G.*, third ed. (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1887), 269.

great changes in events.”<sup>39</sup> This point was also affirmed by the British observer of colonial and dominion nationalism Richard Jebb. Jebb, an Empire publicist and journalist, believed that the decisive moment which heightened Australian nationalist feeling occurred as a result of Germany’s annexation of Northern New Guinea, as previously discussed. Throughout the late colonial period, the colonists’ perceptions of Britain’s Imperial policies in the Pacific were often seen as inept and dangerous to Australian security.<sup>40</sup> To Australians, Germany had duped Britain about its intentions in New Guinea, with disastrous results for the colonies and the Empire. “This”, Jebb wrote, “destroyed the old attitude of indifference to foreign affairs, and the old tradition which located ‘foreign complications’ in far-off Europe.”<sup>41</sup> New Guinea’s strategic importance to Australia was linked with the colonists’ gradual awareness of the extent of the Australasian region and their proximity to European imperialist powers such as Germany and France. Jebb saw the New Guinea debacle as the impetus to form the Australasian Federal Council in 1883, which publicly acknowledged the strategic importance of New Guinea to Australia and urged Britain to claim the remaining unclaimed Pacific islands.<sup>42</sup>

After Australian Federation in 1901 and especially in the wake of Japan’s naval victory over Russia in 1905, attempts were made to counter Japan’s strategic and economic penetration in the South West Pacific.<sup>43</sup> In the interwar period, Australia negotiated the transfer of several island territories with Britain, France and Norway, as well as securing a League of Nations mandate in New

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<sup>39</sup> Leopold von Ranke and Roger Wines, *The Secret of World History: Selected Writings on the Art and Science of History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), 250.

<sup>40</sup> Meaney, *I The Search for Security*, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Jebb, *Studies*, 68.

<sup>42</sup> Jebb, *Studies*, 67. A2219 EXTERNAL RELATIONS VOLUME 20 Documents. Sep. 1920 - Oct. 1921 O – T 1920-1921, Prime Minister. Pacific Branch [148079]

<http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=148079> 2 December 2015 Folio 26.

<sup>43</sup> Meaney, *World Crisis*. Neville Meaney, *Fears & Phobias: E.L. Piessie and the Problem of Japan, 1909-39* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1996). Sheila Dwyer, *Sir William Rooke Creswell and the Foundation of the Australian Navy* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). Paul Thompson, ed. *Close to the Wind: The Early Memoirs (1866-1879) of Admiral Sir William Creswell, K.C.M.G., K.B.E.* (London: Heinemann, 1965). Stephen DeWitt Webster, "Creswell, the Australian Navalist: A Career Biography of Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell, K.C.M.G, K.B.E. (1852-1933)" Ph.D. (Monash University, 1976). J. A.A. Stockwin and Keiko Tamura, eds., *Bridging Australia and Japan: The writings of David Sissons, Historian and Political Scientist*, vol. 1, Asian Studies Series 8 (Canberra: ANU Press, 2016). J. A. La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin: A Biography*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1979 ed. Famous Australian Lives (Carlton; London and New York: Melbourne University Press; Cambridge University Press, 1965).



Guinea.<sup>44</sup> In the 1930s Australia constantly sought reassurance from Britain about Imperial defence, particularly at the 1933 and 1937 Imperial Conferences, which were vital in refining the Singapore naval strategy<sup>45</sup> to defend Australia and New Zealand.<sup>46</sup> The observations of most Australian policy makers revealed that Australasia was a vulnerable white Anglo-Celtic enclave in a potentially hostile neighbourhood. In the new twentieth century, an age of modern communications and transport, Australia was closer to Asia than hitherto understood. The rise of Japan as a future Great Power was carefully observed by Australians in this period and they responded by seeking increased interest in the Pacific from two other Great Powers, Britain and the United States of America (USA).<sup>47</sup>

The British had recognised the geopolitical importance of so called Pacific “stepping stone islands”<sup>48</sup> to Australia as early as February 1788, when Governor Phillip sent Lieutenant King to secure Norfolk Island, thus denying the island to the French.<sup>49</sup> In time, Britain asserted reluctant sovereignty over Tasmania, Western Australia and New Zealand.<sup>50</sup> According to the New Zealand archivist and historian Guy Scholefield, these acquisitions were all “grudging counter-strokes, jealous of the French.”<sup>51</sup> While Britain remained at war with France, there was concern in NSW that the French might exact military or naval reprisals against Britain by attacking British colonies.<sup>52</sup> With the defeat of France in 1815 and the repeal of the highly restrictive Navigation Acts in the 1850s, Australians now turned their attention toward the increasing non-British European presence in

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<sup>44</sup> A461 N413/1 Expeditions. BANZARE [British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition] - Sailing orders for Sir Douglas Mawson 1929 – 1930, External Affairs Correspondence Files [97230] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=97230> 17 February 2014. A6006 1901/12/31 Sale of Kerguelen Island 1901, Cabinet Office [425914] <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=425914> 2 March 2016.

<sup>45</sup> The principal Imperial defence policy for the Far East.

<sup>46</sup> A5954 1811/13 Imperial Conference 1937. Australian Delegation. Paper No 3. Problems Relating to the Basis of Australian Defence Policy. No 1. Priority for Provision of Defence and the Time Factor, Shedden Collection [719524] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=719524> 29 August 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Neville Meaney, “‘A Proposition of the Highest International Importance’: Alfred Deakin’s Pacific Agreement Proposal and its Significance for Australian Imperial Relations,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 5, no. 3 (1967): 200-13.

<sup>48</sup> Derwent Whittlesey, *The Earth and the State: A Study of Political Geography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1939; repr., 1944; 1951), 67-8, 72, 75.

<sup>49</sup> Gordon Greenwood, *Australia: A Social and Political History* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1955; repr., 1959), 5-6.

<sup>50</sup> Ernest Scott, *A Short History of Australia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), 90.

<sup>51</sup> Guy H. Scholefield, *The Pacific: Its Past and Future and the Policies of the Great Powers from the Eighteenth Century* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W, 1919), 3, 274. See also Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 76.

<sup>52</sup> Scott, *Australia*, 93.

the region.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, the enormous task of developing the continent was proceeding very slowly due to shortages of labour and this kept the issue of immigration very much in the public's mind.<sup>54</sup>

A Colonial Office pamphlet of 1843 specified that the preferred sources of British emigrants to Australia should be married men, "mechanics and handicraftsmen or farm servants." They were to be "under thirty-five but ... should not exceed fifty years of age" and their wives were to accompany them.<sup>55</sup> British politician Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a vigorous supporter of migration, initially suggested that Britain's poorer classes should immigrate to the colonies.<sup>56</sup> However, while convict transportation and the war with France continued, the British government actively discouraged the poorer classes from migration to the Australian colonies; indeed shipping companies made no provision for poor migrants.<sup>57</sup>

The least desired migrants were coolie labourers. The term coolie is used here in the contemporary sense to define unskilled native labour from India, China or other Asian countries.<sup>58</sup> Despite critical labour shortages, the colonies remained cautious about admitting Asian labour. In 1841 a NSW Select Committee considered that the undesirable economic and social consequences of coolie labourers were sufficient reasons to deny them admission.<sup>59</sup> Conversely, in the brief periods when ample labourers and convicts were available, free immigrant labourers resented competition

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<sup>53</sup> European imperialism in the Pacific also reflected the existing rivalries of the Old World. Rodney Maddock and Ian W. McLean, "The Australian Economy in the Very Long Run," in *The Australian Economy in the Long Run* Rodney Maddock and Ian W. McLean (Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>54</sup> The causes of labour shortages included the reluctance of many free immigrants to work in rural areas or new settlements such as Swan River in Western Australia and the intermittent tensions in the colonial economies caused by the gold rushes. A.G.L. Shaw, *The Story of Australia*, Revised, 1972 ed. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1955; repr., 1975), 81, 83, 96, 117.

<sup>55</sup> R. Montgomery Martin, *History of the Colonies of the British Empire* (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co. and George Routledge, 1843), Appendix VIII. – On Emigration, 275.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia, Together with the Outline of a System of Colonization*, ed. Robert Gouger (London: Joseph Cross, 1829), 87-8.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Charles Mills, *The Colonization of Australia (1829-42): The Wakefield Experiment in Empire Building Studies in Economics and Political Science No. 44* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, 1915), 176. Wakefield's ideas had been advocated singly before but he was the first to "fuse them into a systematic and consistent whole." Reginald George Trotter, *The British Empire-Commonwealth: A Study in Political Evolution* Berkshire Studies in European History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), 8-9. The adventurer and travel writer Ritchie also thought that Australia was still no place for the poor migrant in 1890. J. Ewing Ritchie, *An Australian Ramble, or, A Summer in Australia* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1890), 234-5.

<sup>58</sup> Hughes, Mitchell, and Ramson, *Oxford Dictionary*.

<sup>59</sup> Willard, *White Australia Policy*, 4. Sandra M. Tweedie, *Trading Partners: Australia and Asia 1790-1993* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd., 1994), 14.

from convicted felons.<sup>60</sup> With the ending of convict transportation in 1840, coolie labour was again sought by NSW pastoralists, but only small numbers entered the colony before gold was discovered in 1851.<sup>61</sup> As workers flocked to the gold fields, severe shortages of labour were experienced by most industries, with public works in NSW coming to a complete standstill.<sup>62</sup> Wakefield again suggested Chinese immigration, but neglected to consider that most Chinese upon landing, went straight to the gold fields.<sup>63</sup>

The discovery of gold in the 1850s, the ensuing labour shortages and the regular rumours of invasion, this time by Russia, revitalised the immigration debates. At the same time, colonial nationalism was emerging, but one which the journalist Jebb located within the bounds of Imperial patriotism. Nevertheless, Jebb reminded Britain that where Imperial defence and regional policy were unsatisfactory, such as London's indifferent responses to colonial defence, or rejection of colonial governments' immigration restriction bills, colonial nationalism would prevail.<sup>64</sup>

Benedict Anderson's work on the retention of and intensification of race patriotism in British white settler colonies throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is also highly relevant here. He highlights the ways in which colonists developed new forms of nationalism, largely derived from the cultural artefacts that they brought to the new colony.<sup>65</sup> Such artefacts included the colonists' understandings of John Locke's writings on political consent, freedom as an individual good, and the benefits of parliamentary government.<sup>66</sup> When combined with a structure proposed by the Australian geographer Grenfell Price in his analysis of settler groups in the tropics – the qualities of immigrant peoples, the environmental phenomena that the colonists confront and “the political pressures”

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<sup>60</sup> Shaw, *The Story*, 96. Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia*, 223-4.

<sup>61</sup> Because of labour shortages in the other colonies and the need for a labour force to establish the new settlements, transportation only ended in Tasmania in 1860 and Western Australia in 1868. Shaw, *The Story*, 96.

<sup>62</sup> T.A. Coghlan and T.T. Ewing, *The Progress of Australasia in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. XI (London, Toronto and Philadelphia: The Linscott Publishing Company, 1902), 364.

<sup>63</sup> Mills, *The Colonization of Australia*, 300.

<sup>64</sup> Meaney quoting Richard Jebb. Meaney, *1 The Search for Security*, 7. Jebb, *Studies*, 1-2.

<sup>65</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. Conversely, as Hancock noted, those who saw themselves as intensely British, sometimes had “a special dislike for the English.” Hancock, *Australia*, 50. Some observers believed “that the Australian type is quite different from that of the Mother Country and the original colonists; for the third generation with both parents Australian-born, is one with typically jet-black hair and very dark eyes, i.e. is in appearance essentially ‘Neapolitan’.” J.G. Bartholomew and Lionel William Lyde, *An Atlas of Economic Geography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), xiii.

<sup>66</sup> Harold J. Laski, *Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham* (New York and London: Henry Holt & Company; Williams & Norgate, 1920), 9, 16, 29-30.

exercised by the Imperial metropole “through political sovereignty, economic policies and markets”<sup>67</sup> – nationalism was heightened to a level that manifestly exceeded the intensity of their original homeland.<sup>68</sup> As Alfred Deakin noted, many Australians regarded themselves as “independent Australian Britons.”<sup>69</sup> The Australian colonists proudly retained their heritage and embraced British customs and values. But, as Jebb observed, they used their Imperial patriotism to further Australian nationalism in the unique environment of a single continent peopled by one homogenous race.<sup>70</sup>

Against this complex backdrop and in response to increased Asian arrivals, the Australian colonies enacted a series of increasingly restrictive immigration laws between 1855 and 1898. By 1877, the immigration restriction legislation of Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania had evolved to the point where it now represented an almost uniform policy of Asian exclusion,<sup>71</sup> or the WAP. The discussion to this point has focussed on the geopolitical contexts in which immigration restriction came to be embedded. The remainder of the paper will examine the effects of immigration restriction on one area of Australia’s geopolitical outlook: regional trade.

### **Impediments to Australia’s Trade with Asia**

Immigration restriction impeded commercial and economic development of colonial Australia directly and indirectly from 1788. As Sandra Tweedie’s research has revealed, unnecessary and deliberate fetters on commerce and trade in colonial NSW produced a gradual negativity towards Asia and Asians in the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> The genesis of this negativity came about through three

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<sup>67</sup> Significantly, Price dismissed racial characteristics as indicative of successful living in the tropics. A. Grenfell Price and with additional notes by Robert G. Stone, *White Settlers in the Tropics* American Geographical Society Special Publication No. 23 (New York: American Geographical Society, 1939), 1712.

<sup>68</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 13-4.

<sup>69</sup> E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations During World War I* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 31. See also W.K. Hancock, "Independent Australian Britons," in *Politics in Pitcairn and Other Essays* W. K. Hancock (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1947), 51-64; see especially 60-1.

<sup>70</sup> Jebb, *Studies*, 1-2.

<sup>71</sup> S.H. Roberts, "History of the Contacts Between the Orient and Australia," in *Australia and the Far East: Diplomatic and Trade Relations* I. Clunies Ross (Sydney: Angus & Robertson Limited. In conjunction with the Australian Institute of International Affairs (NSW Branch), 1936), 8.

<sup>72</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 8.

key restrictions that Britain had enforced since the sixteenth century. The first two and most stringent were those imposed by the Navigation Acts, and the shipping monopolies or Shipping Conferences, as these were euphemistically called, that frequently held the trade of the Australian colonies to ransom.<sup>73</sup> These legal and commercial instruments automatically applied to all British colonies. Through strict prohibitions on the types of cargoes, the composition of merchant crews, and the points of origin of merchant ships, the Navigation Acts effectively prohibited any potential Australasian maritime trade with Asia until their repeal in the 1850s.<sup>74</sup> Mercantile trade laws, in the guise of the British East India Company monopolies, provided the final impediment to colonial trade. Governor Phillip's commission from the King expressly forbade trade between NSW and Asia, or even the construction of ships that might be capable of such trade, without the governor's permission.<sup>75</sup> This was a generous concession to the East India Company that dictated and retarded Australia's economic development and trade until its repeal in 1834. The tea trade in the nineteenth century provides a further pertinent example of trade restrictions endured by colonial Australia.

NSW began importing tea from China after 1800 and the East India Company's concessions ensured the colony maintained adverse trade balances with Asia until the 1850s. The poor trading situation was also exacerbated by a lack of complementarity between the two economies.<sup>76</sup> From the 1800s onward, the Australian colonies imported increasing amounts of tea from China, but they lacked a suitable product to export in exchange.<sup>77</sup> As Peter Drysdale has explained in his study of Australian and Japanese trade, "the extent of trade between any two countries ... depends upon ... the degree of complementarity, *and the geographical, political, and historical closeness of the two*

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<sup>73</sup> England, *An act for the encouraging and increasing of shipping and navigation*, 2 Car. II, c. 18 (13 September 1660). John Bach, *A Maritime History of Australia*, Sydney: Pan Books (Australia) Pty Limited, 1982 ed. (Sydney: Thomas Nelson (Australia) Limited, 1976), 177.

<sup>74</sup> England *The Great Navigation Act* 2 Car. II, c. 18.

<sup>75</sup> Watson, *HRA I*, 15-16. See also Alan Frost, "The East India Company and the choice of Botany Bay," in *The Founding of Australia: The Argument About Australia's Origins* Ged Martin (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1978), 229-235.

<sup>76</sup> Britain vastly reduced the duty on tea in 1783 and the market rapidly expanded in most British possessions. Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 14-15. **On complementarity Tweedie quotes Peter Drysdale, "Japanese-Australian Trade" (paper presented at the Modern Japan Seminar, 1965) (Canberra: Department of International Relations, Australian National University, 1965)**

<sup>77</sup> John Dunmore Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony*, Second ed., vol. I (London and Edinburgh: A.J. Valpy; Bell and Bradfute, 1837), 436.

economies.”<sup>78</sup> In addition to negative or unacceptable trade balances, complementarity affects shipping rates, insurances and investor risk. British and US shipping companies preferred to have a return cargo available, particularly when visiting what are still seen as distant Australian ports.<sup>79</sup> Australian wool exports began to gradually increase in the late nineteenth century but Britain was the preferred destination, not China.<sup>80</sup> It was only after Australia began to source tea from India and Ceylon that the Chinese market share in Australia collapsed.<sup>81</sup> Again, it was Britain and the East India Company that benefitted from Australia’s new sources of tea. Sandra Tweedie concludes that Australia’s economic interests were “accommodated only when they served British interests.”<sup>82</sup> In his wide ranging study of colonial Australia, the first Commonwealth statistician Timothy Coghlan, observed that Australia’s trade and communications were restricted by Britain to advance Imperial and East India Company commercial interests.<sup>83</sup> Some commercial and trade restrictions, he says, “were of a peculiarly harassing and impolitic nature, and were calculated greatly to discourage mercantile speculation.”<sup>84</sup>

In 1894 the geopolitics of Asia and the Pacific were abruptly modified when Japan defeated China in a short war. This event heralded the first signs of a Japanese sphere of influence within China and the North Asian region. In the same year Japan concluded a commercial treaty with Britain,<sup>85</sup> followed by a naval treaty in 1902 that would subsequently endure as an alliance until 1922.<sup>86</sup> Britain had clearly, if perhaps reluctantly, accepted and formally recognised Japan’s geostrategic place in Asia and the Pacific. But the Anglo-Japanese Treaty also demonstrated to

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<sup>78</sup> My emphasis. Drysdale, "Japanese-Australian Trade," 83, 87.

<sup>79</sup> Writing in 1904, John Root believed that terminal charges formed a greater part of the cost of oceanic transport of goods and that “the difference between 3000 and 6000 miles by sea is not as great as it looks.” Root, *Trade Relations*, 50.

<sup>80</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 15.

<sup>81</sup> T.A. Coghlan, *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia, 1901-1902* (Sydney: William Applegate Gullick, Government Printer, 1902), 1061.

<sup>82</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 16.

<sup>83</sup> Coghlan and Ewing, *The Progress*, 318.

<sup>84</sup> Coghlan’s many reports, books, essays and pamphlets convey a palpable historical immediacy that few writers can emulate. Coghlan and Ewing, *The Progress*, 319.

<sup>85</sup> Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between Great Britain and Japan, London 16 July 1894, in A8 1902/51 PART 1 Japanese in Queensland Treaty of 1894 Protocol Correspondence 1895-1902, External Affairs Correspondence Files [52465] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=52465> 18 February 2017 Folios 187-194.

<sup>86</sup> The Anglo-Japanese Agreements of 1902, 1905 and 1911 and the Anglo-Japanese Declaration of 1920, in A981 JAP 96 Anglo-Japanese Alliance [Contains 2 Folders] 1901-1921, External Affairs Correspondence Files 1927-1942 [177512] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=177512> 15 February 2017 Folios 3-6.

Australia and New Zealand that Britain had reduced Far Eastern fleet numbers in order to counter the new German naval threat in the North Sea.<sup>87</sup>

The Australian colonies were also invited to accede to the 1894 Treaty of Commerce, but Britain declined to compel them.<sup>88</sup> All of the colonies feared Article One, which guaranteed freedom of entry, travel and residence for the contracting parties. However, with the later addition of a clause excluding “the immigration of artisans and labourers” between the signatories, Queensland became the only Australian colony to accede to the Treaty in 1897.<sup>89</sup> With further land and naval victories over Korea (1900) and Russia (1905), Japan now vied for a place as a Great Power in the Pacific. The geostrategic threat posed by European nations in the South Pacific receded in the wake of Japan’s defeat of Russia in 1905. As a new and expanding Great Power seeking new territory in East Asia, Japan became firmly fixed in the minds of Australian political leaders and strategists.<sup>90</sup>

With the achievement of Federation and the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) and the Pacific Island Labourers Act (1901), the central geopolitical tenet of colonial White Australia was transferred to the Commonwealth of Australia.<sup>91</sup> Nationally, the WAP assumed an even more formidable potency in Australia’s regional policies and international relations. Chinese and Japanese newspapers regularly attacked the policy and the Japanese Ambassador to Britain frequently made representations to the British Foreign Office seeking slight modifications of the policy, or at least a softening of the tone and manner of its expression and manifestation.<sup>92</sup>

Additional attacks came from local Chinese and Japanese business men who had been able to retain

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<sup>87</sup> Meaney, *The Search for Security*, 10, 172. Carl Bridge, “Relations with the United States,” in *Between Empire and Nation: Australia’s External Relations from Federation to the Second World War* Bernard Attard and Carl Bridge (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2000), 174.

<sup>88</sup> Great Britain and Japan, Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between Great Britain and Japan Signed at London 16 July 1894, in A2219 EXTERNAL RELATIONS VOLUME 1 A Relations of Australia & Japan and Far Eastern and Pacific Questions May-Dec. 1900-1918 Prime Minister. Pacific Branch [148060] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=148060> 28 January 2014.

<sup>89</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 19.

<sup>90</sup> Canada and New Zealand expressed similar concerns. Christopher West, *Canada and Sea Power* (Toronto: McClelland and Goodchild, Limited, 1913), 48. See also Gerard Fiennes, *Sea Power and Freedom: A Historical Study* (London and New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons; The Knickerbocker Press, 1918), 31. D.C.S. Sissons, “Australia’s Attitudes to Japan and Defence, 1890-1923” (M.A. diss., University of Melbourne, 1956). Ronald Norris, *The Emergent Commonwealth: Australian Federation, Expectations and Fulfilment 1889-1910*, ed. J. A. La Nauze, A. W. Martin, and Geoffrey Serle Studies in Australian Federation (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1975), 101.

<sup>91</sup> *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* 1 EDWARD VII. No. 17 of 1901. *Australia Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901* 1 EDWARD VII. No. 16 of 1901.

<sup>92</sup> A8 1901/27/9 Correspondence from Colonial Office re Japanese representations on Immigration Restriction Bill 1901, External Affairs [51822] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=51822> 6 March 2015.

residency in Australia after 1901.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, the Department of External Affairs and immigration officials had to navigate a difficult path between strict adherences to the Immigration Restriction Act and attempts to encourage “the development of trade between Australia and China.”<sup>94</sup> Australian officials also endeavoured to deflect attacks and misinformation by detailed replies to inquiries from foreign press agents.<sup>95</sup>

The sum of these considerable impediments to commerce was that Australians were encouraged to trade with their protector, Britain. Australian firms were discouraged from trading with potential rivals or enemies,<sup>96</sup> such as Asia, and particularly in the early twentieth century, Japan. Susan Strange has argued that trade exchanges are not simply the outcome of market forces” but include trade-offs in a state’s security and commercial interests.<sup>97</sup> This aspect of trade and diplomacy was reinforced in the 1936 Australian Trade Diversion policy. This policy openly favoured Britain at the expense of a growing and prosperous Australian trade with Japan, at that time Australia’s second best trading partner.<sup>98</sup> As Prime Minister Joseph Lyons wrote to his British counterpart, trade diversion “cannot fail to [bring] about resumption of immigration from [the] United Kingdom ... and make useful and timely although indirect contribution to Empire defence.”<sup>99</sup> Trade was influenced by Australia’s security structure, its political, social and cultural history to such an extent that Sandra Tweedie believes it fostered indirectly, “an almost unconscious ... attitude of ‘anything will do for Asians’ in terms of product presentation and delivery.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> A1 1923/1089 W. Howe. Chinese Newspapers and the "White Australia Policy" 1922-1923, Prime Minister [42817] <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=42817> 10 April 2017.

<sup>94</sup> Letter, Sidney Hing Lowe, to Sydney Daily Telegraph 14 November 1922, in A1 1923/1089 W. Howe. Chinese Newspapers and the "White Australia Policy" 1922-1923, Prime Minister [42817] <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=42817> 10 April 2017 Folio 15.

<sup>95</sup> Letter, Secretary, External Affairs, to James A. Burtley, British and Colonial Press, 28 September 1920, in A981 MIG 52 PART 2 "Migration Restrictions - Australia - Policy & Practice Pt.II" [includes policy and some history of the White Australia Policy] 1919-1939, External Affairs [178856] <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=178856> 10 April 2017 Folios 204-207.

<sup>96</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 8. Tweedie quotes the ideas of Susan Strange, *States and Markets*, Second, 1994; Reprint 2003 ed. (London and New York: Continuum, 1988), 183, 205-6.

<sup>97</sup> Strange, *States and Markets*, 165.

<sup>98</sup> Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, Cable, SECRET, to UK Prime Minister, 18 May 1936, in A425 1939/2673 Trade general - cables relating to the introduction of the Trade Diversion Policy in May 1936 Trade and Customs [63621] <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=63621> 3 June 2015 Folios 54-56.

<sup>99</sup> Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, "A425 1939/2673" 63621 Folio 56.

<sup>100</sup> Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, 8.



By 1901 Australians had established a “geopolitical gaze” that spanned three oceans.<sup>101</sup> It drew on a “threat and protector thesis” that had been inherent in Australian understandings of its place in the Pacific since 1788.<sup>102</sup> With the benefit of over eighty years of hindsight, we can say even more strongly than Keith Hancock wrote in 1930, that the WAP imbued Australia’s regional and foreign policies with traits that they would not have otherwise possessed. Indeed, the constellation of the colonies’ collective immigration restriction policies became Australia’s first foreign policy. There were damaging negative effects of White Australia in terms of geo-strategy, security and trade, as evinced by the Trade Diversion Policy. By the 1930s, Australia was confronted with the possibility that it might one day be at war with its second best trading partner, Japan. In the wake of the economic downturn following the Great War and the Great Depression, trade with Japan had largely alleviated Australia’s serious balance of payments deficit. The same tensions between trade and defence policies are reflected in the current relationship with Australia’s principal trading partner China, and principal ally the United States. Changes in long term policy positions do take time to achieve, but it is the lack of any meaningful attempts to make changes in colonial and Commonwealth administrations that severely impeded Australia’s early trade with Asia. It also highlights the enduring paramountcy of racial exclusion in Australia’s colonial and early Federation history.

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<sup>101</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), 53.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Higgott and Jim George, "Tradition and Change in the Study of International Relations in Australia," *International Political Science Review* 11, no. 4 (1990): 424-7. The threats were Asia, France, Germany, Russia and the United States and the protector was Britain.