

***AN ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE OF AUSTRALIA***

***CONSTITUTING THE KNOWING CITIZEN IN***

***CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA***

Maria Chisari

Doctor of Philosophy, Communication

University of Technology, Sydney

2013

## CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

*I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.*

*I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.*

*Signature of Student:*

*Date:*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost my supervisor Associate Professor Katrina Schlunke for all her support. Her good humour coupled with her incredible body of knowledge on all things Foucauldian and beyond guided me to the finish line. I would also like to thank Virginia Watson, Elaine Kelly, Alastair Pennycook, Ros Appleby and Kitty te Riele for their assistance. I extend a special thanks to the librarian Patrick Tooth who helped me with all my queries with Endnote, to Juleigh Slater for her administrative know-how, and Chheng Vath who provided footstools, document stands and all other essential stationary goodies. I would also like to thank Lorraine Shannon for her generosity with her time and expertise that extended beyond her professional editorial work on my thesis.

I thank all the FASS students and staff with whom I debated over the pros and cons of cultural studies, sociology and sociolinguistics, pondered over research methodologies and participated in writing and reading groups. Too many too name, I single out here my 'lunchtime buddies', Kelly Chan, Mehal Krayem and Jesica Mwithia. We shared many laksas at 'the Malaysian place' or in *The Bagel* while we discussed the intricacies of our research, witnessed a collapsing crane from our Building 10 windows and solved the problems of the world on a daily basis. A big thank you also goes to all of the research participants who shared their stories and hopes of settling in Australia.

A special thanks goes to my dearest friend Fiona Pacey. From day one of commencing my thesis, Fiona's support has been unwavering. Fiona listened to my 'ups and downs' of doctoral study with exceptional calmness and patience, kept a constant lookout for me of news stories and journal articles about the Australian citizenship test, read some of my chapters and even helped me find academic employment. Fiona did all this while working full-time and commencing her own PhD. I wish her all the best in her doctoral studies.

The period of my candidature was sadly marked by the passing of too many loved ones, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and friends. Here I want to mention two incredible women. Firstly I wish to acknowledge the support of Professor Alison Lee who was always so encouraging of women returning to higher education. During my first year of 'course work', Alison stressed the importance of writing everyday and she encouraged me to present conference papers and publish journal articles throughout my candidature. I mention also my dear old school friend Ruth Joshua-Graham. No matter how ill she was feeling, she would often ring to ask how my studies were going. Watching the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics in her Tassie home with her 'miracle baby' Caitlin is a bitter-sweet memory as we chuckled about national identity, teaching and being mums.

This thesis would never have been completed without the support of my family; to Philippe for all his hard work; to my loving parents who provided food, babysitting, picked up the girls from school travelling on public transport, did my grocery shopping (again on buses), gave me more food and are always there for me no matter what I throw at them. Grazie Mamma e Papá.

Finally, I want to thank my two wonderful daughters for being my personal cheer squad throughout my candidature. My little Isabella taught me how to make power point presentations and presented me with many beautiful pieces of artwork to decorate my workstation. My Nathalie helped me file and categorise research articles and textbooks, recorded student results on spreadsheets and gave me invaluable feedback on my introductory chapter. Both girls have put up with my grumpiness and even accompanied me to a conference presentation! I am so proud of my girls and cherish their love, interest and cuddles that have sustained me over these six long years of study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PART ONE: INTRODUCING THE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP TEST .....</b>	<b>10</b>
CHAPTER ONE: A TEST OF/FOR OUR TIMES.....	11
<i>A citizenship ceremony on Australia Day.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>A 'new' technology of government.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Structure of thesis.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Significance of study.....</i>	<i>24</i>
CHAPTER TWO: GENEALOGY AND GOVERNMENTALITY IN THE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP TEST .....	26
<i>Situating the Australian citizenship test in cultural studies.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Genealogy as method.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Doing genealogy.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>An emphasis on populations.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Problematizations and their technologies.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Government and freedom .....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Citizenship theories.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Reassuring the population.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Genealogy and governmentality as critique.....</i>	<i>48</i>
CHAPTER THREE: FROM BRITISH SUBJECT TO AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN: FROM ASSIMILATION TO INTEGRATION.....	50
<i>A history of citizenship in Australia.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Building a white nation.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>After the war: populate or perish .....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Assimilation and the Australian way of life .....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Civic resources: Educating the alien-citizen.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Know Australia – the booklet.....</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>The Discussion Paper .....</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Public Responses.....</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Becoming an Australian citizen – the booklet .....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Citizenship ceremonies – performing reassurance .....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<b>PART TWO: THE METAMORPHOSIS OF 'CORE' NATIONAL VALUES .....</b>	<b>84</b>
CHAPTER FOUR: INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN VALUES.....	85
<i>Core values.....</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Defining Australian values.....</i>	<i>89</i>
<i>The values in Becoming an Australian Citizen .....</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Universal values.....</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Free, secular values.....</i>	<i>98</i>
<i>Respect for the individual – respect for the nation.....</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Mateship and a fair go .....</i>	<i>101</i>
<i>Tolerance and respect.....</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Before becoming an Australian citizen: Let's Participate .....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Essential knowledge for the migrant-citizen in Let's Participate.....</i>	<i>107</i>

Unit 2: Australia and its people.....	108
Rights, responsibilities and privileges in Let's Participate.....	111
Conclusion .....	113
CHAPTER FIVE: A COMMITMENT TO MULTICULTURALISM, CITIZENSHIP AND AUSTRALIAN VALUES .....	115
Introducing multiculturalism to the Australian people .....	116
The FitzGerald Report in the year of the Bicentenary .....	121
The legacy of FitzGerald.....	131
Howard's One Australia policy.....	132
The national agenda for a multicultural Australia 1989.....	137
Politics and patriotism.....	138
1999 Multicultural agenda.....	140
Conclusion .....	143
CHAPTER SIX: PREPARING THE AUSTRALIAN COMPACT .....	145
Celebrating Federation: Australian citizenship for a new century .....	146
Celebrating the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the citizenship act.....	151
Australian citizenship for a new century.....	154
Comparisons between the Australian Compact and Australian values .....	157
The Council's promotion of multiculturalism .....	161
Australian citizenship ... a common bond.....	162
Australian citizenship: then and now .....	167
The National Framework of Values Education for Australian Schools.....	172
CHAPTER SEVEN: FORGETTING MULTICULTURALISM – SECURING OUR BRITISH HERITAGE ...	176
Forgetting the –isms: The final transformation of Australian values .....	178
Putting aside Amanda Vanstone for Peter Costello's values .....	181
The National Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security .....	186
It's official: Australian values as government-sanctioned national identity.....	188
And then the M-word became the 'dirty' word (until it was no more) .....	191
The coming together of the Howard project.....	193
Discussing Australian values – some migrant perspectives .....	195
Migrant values .....	197
The value of multi-culture .....	199
Conclusion .....	202
<b>PART THREE: HISTORY AS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE .....</b>	<b>204</b>
CHAPTER EIGHT: THE GREAT ACHIEVERS IN A STORY OF AUSTRALIA.....	205
A Story of Australia in Becoming an Australian Citizen.....	205
Howard's history .....	207
History and national identity.....	212
The historian as expert.....	215
In search of good history.....	217
The founding population of Australia in A Story of Australia.....	220
Diggers in a peaceful land.....	225
The non-chief human actors of history .....	229
CHAPTER NINE: ABSURD HISTORY.....	237
Migration's non-contributions to nation-building.....	237
A history of terra nullius.....	244
A need for intervention .....	250
The white man's burden.....	253
No Stolen Generations.....	257
The 'correct' Australian history .....	261

<i>Migrants reading Australian history</i> .....	263
<b>PART FOUR: REFORMING THE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP TEST</b> .....	<b>268</b>
CHAPTER TEN: HISTORY AS NON-ESSENTIAL ... YET NICE TO KNOW .....	269
<i>A newly elected government</i> .....	271
<i>A history not to be shared by all Australians</i> .....	275
<i>'Nice to know' history</i> .....	278
<i>Our Australian Story</i> .....	280
<i>Notable Australians</i> .....	281
<i>Indigenous Australians</i> .....	285
<i>Remembering the Stolen Generations</i> .....	289
<i>History as a curative science</i> .....	295
CHAPTER ELEVEN: FROM AUSTRALIANVALUES TO THECITIZENSHIP PLEDGE .....	298
<i>Reforming the Australian citizenship test</i> .....	299
<i>The expert committee members</i> .....	301
<i>The consultation process</i> .....	305
<i>Submissions to the Australian Citizenship Test Review Committee</i> .....	307
<i>The Committee's recommendations</i> .....	309
<i>The Pledge of Commitment</i> .....	311
<i>A speech made by the Minister for Social Inclusion, Tanya Plibersek</i> .....	320
<i>Migrant perspectives on the pledge and being Australian</i> .....	324
<i>Belonging in Australia – an unrequited love?</i> .....	326
<i>A final word from the knowing citizen</i> .....	331
CONCLUSION: BEING AUSTRALIAN TODAY .....	332
REFERENCE LIST .....	340

## **ABSTRACT**

The Australian citizenship test was introduced by the Howard Government in October 2007 in order to assess whether migrants and refugees seeking the conferral of Australian citizenship had 'an adequate knowledge of Australia'. This new requirement was enacted in the *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Act 2007* and it was made technical and calculable through a standardised computerised test administered to prospective citizens by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The requirement that test candidates have an adequate knowledge of Australia placed the onus on migrants to learn about Australian history and a set of 'core' values known as 'Australian values' that were believed to epitomise the 'Australian way of life'. In this way, the Howard Government viewed the conferral of Australian citizenship not as a status that bestowed civic rights and responsibilities on new citizens but instead conflated becoming a naturalised Australian citizen with the notion of 'being Australian', a form of subjectivity that the new citizen had to learn, embody and live by.

This new order of knowledge was a key governmental strategy that required migrants become knowledgeable citizens of Australian culture in order to integrate into the broader Australian community and secure social cohesion. New, too, under this testing regime was the requirement that candidates self-regulate their learning and preparation for the test. Civic education no longer remained part of settlement and language programs for newly arrived migrants as they now had to engage in private

study of the contents of the resource booklets, *Becoming an Australian Citizen* and *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond*. Since the electoral victory of the Rudd-Gillard Governments, the legislative requirement to have an adequate knowledge of Australia that is included in the revised Australian citizenship test has shifted from a mandatory knowledge of Australian values and Australian history to knowledge constituted as the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship that are promoted as part of the taking of the Pledge of Commitment. Yet, while the orders of knowledge required to pass the test have changed, the desire that new citizens 'perform' Australianness still remains.

Informed by Foucault's writings on genealogy and governmentality and situated in the field of cultural studies, this thesis explores how the concept of becoming an Australian citizen is produced in and through the assemblage of texts, discourses and institutions engaged in the production of becoming an Australian. Using textual analyses of key government documents on Australian citizenship, political speeches, newspaper reports and migrant interviews, the analysis suggests that the main aim of the Australian citizenship test is to reassure the 'mainstream' community that the Australian way of life will prevail in modern Australia. By revealing the shifts, effects and inventiveness of these discourses about what constitutes the 'true' Australian identity and what represents the 'real' Australian, this study allows us to imagine other forms of subjectivity and alternative versions of national histories and civic values that come together to make up the everyday desires of belonging within the Australian community.