CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF VIETNAMESE-AUSTRALIANS IN MELBOURNE

MARK ROBERTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	**Association of South East Asian Nations**
AVCCI	**Australian Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry**
AVWWA	**Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association**
DRV	**Democratic Republic of Vietnam**
HCMC	**Ho Chi Minh City**
MLC	**Member of the Legislative Council (Victoria)**
MP	**Member of Parliament**
SICMAA	**Springvale Indochinese Mutual Assistance Association**
USIA	**United States Information Agency**
VCA	**Vietnamese Community in Australia – Victorian Chapter**
VSA	**Vietnamese Students Association**
VWA	**Vietnamese Women's Association**

SYNOPSIS

This thesis examines Vietnamese-Australians' attitudes towards citizenship and political participation in Austrahan society. Concepts of citizenship that seek to go beyond multiculturalism provide the framework, and quahtative interviews are used to gather the research data. Information-rich subjects were actively sought, so the list of interviewees includes people who are relatively well educated and in positions of some leadership. In that sense, it does not mirror the overall Vietnamese-Australian community. However, these people can think deeply about the issues under examination in this thesis and their contributions have been extremely valuable.

Discussion centres on citizenship and barriers to participation, the Vietnamese community associations, and the 'friendship' agreement between District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City and the City of Maribyrnong. Analysis of the interview data reveals that Vietnamese-Australians value citizenship and are generally aware of rights and responsibilities. All Vietnamese-Australians retain an emotional attachment to Vietnam, while some feel an even stronger political obligation towards their homeland. For some people, this could detract from their participation, as has been shown by the strong reaction of the 'official' Vietnamese community to the 'friendship' arrangement organised by Mai Ho, as Mayor of the City of Maribyrnong. Interviews reveal a range of responses concerning this incident, illustrating that the Vietnamese-Australian community is growing in complexity and diversity. It appears that there are educated, second-generation Vietnamese-Australians who are growing into adulthood with ideas for the future of the Vietnamese-Australian community. Politicians such as Mai Ho and Sang Nguyen have overcome enormous obstacles to achieve positions as public figures, however, data from interviewees suggests that their main role has been symbolic. They have shown that it is possible to participate, and for others to follow. These new representatives will have an Austrahan education, a more sophisticated command of English, and an awareness of an expanded citizenship that allows for greater inclusiveness. While using their skills for the Vietnamese-Australian community, they are also likely to be involved in the Australia-Vietnam relationship, and in contributing another voice to the broader Australian society.

INTRODUCTION

Notions of citizenship and multiculturalism suggest that people from a Vietnamese background should have the opportunity to participate fully in Australian society. This dissertation will show that they can participate, but that there are two types of constraints operating. On the one hand, there is a tension between Australian citizenship and the pull of the homeland. On the other hand, there are barriers within Australian society such as racism and language difficulty.

In Australia's liberal democratic and culturally diverse society, everybody should be able to live as full members of that society. When Vietnamese refugees began coming here after the Vietnam war, they were regarded as a 'test-case' for the policy of multiculturahsm, which had only just commenced following the official abandonment of the White Australia Policy. Clearly, it was an even bigger test for the refugees, who had suffered the horrors of war, been forced to leave their homeland and then risked everything to arrive here. Once they were in Austraha, they faced enormous difficulties in adjusting because, not only did they have to handle the effects of 'culture shock' in a new and very different society, but they had to do this within the context of an Australia that was itself changing socially, economically and politically. Now that the Vietnamese-Austrahan[1] community has been growing for twenty-three years, it is important to assess their situation, particularly in the light of growing racist challenges. Is it possible for members of this community to participate fully in the wider society?[2] Do the Vietnamese community associations assist this process? Is theirs a forward-looking attitude towards relations between Australia and Vietnam? Is it in fact the young people, the second-generation Australians, who will provide the answers to these questions?[3]

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[1] 'Vietnamese-Australian' is used to describe people of Vietnamese origin who are living in Australia. Some people might prefer the use of Australian-Vietnamese, but the former option was chosen after discussions with some of the interviewees and reference to publications emanating from the community, particularly *Integration: the magazine for Vietnamese and multicultural issues*, produced by the Vietnamese Community in Australia. Those who were interviewed for this project were either educated or in positions of leadership, or both. In other words, an elite that is not an accurate representation of the overall community. Nevertheless, they possess the ability to think deeply on the important issues, so their opinions are of value.

[2] This dissertation will concentrate on the Vietnamese-Australian community in Melbourne.

[3] 'Second-generation' here refers to those who have had most, if not all, their education in Australia.

Citizenship theory will provide the framework within which the capacity of such participation can be examined. Theories of citizenship will be reviewed, together with the brief history of Australian citizenship. The classical approach of writers such as T.H. Marshall (1950)[4] will be contrasted with current debates, which attempt to incorporate concepts of democratic pluralism and globalisation into a theory of citizenship for the Twenty-First Century. These ideas acknowledge the need for members of increasingly diverse societies to be recognised and allowed to participate, while also encouraging citizens to look past their local boundaries. Implicit in such notions is the desire to move beyond a multiculturalism based only on ethnicity to a society that includes multiple identities. In Australia, such debates need to occur as part of the progression to a republican system of government. Interviews with Vietnamese-Australians will enable their attitudes towards Australian citizenship to be expressed.

A brief history of the Vietnamese-Australian community in Australia will be provided, and its complexity demonstrated by using the examples of several community associations. Both formal and informal networks have assisted Vietnamese refugees to settle in Australia. However, now that the Vietnamese-Australian community has been established for over twenty years, it is appropriate to assess the effectiveness of these organisations in helping people participate fully in Australian society. Is it possible for their leaders to look forward with a positive attitude, allowing people born in Vietnam and Australia to increase their mutual understanding, thereby benefitting both Australia and Vietnam?

As this research project began, there was a controversy within the Vietnamese-Australian community, which will be discussed as an attempt at understanding the complexity of this community in contemporary Australia. Mai Ho, a former Vietnamese refugee, in her last weeks as Mayor of the City of Maribyrnong, an area in the western suburbs of Melbourne, took a delegation to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and set up a 'friendship' arrangement between District 1 of that city and the City of Maribyrnong. The strong

[4] Marshall argues that membership of society confers civil, political and social rights that provide individual freedom, political power and social welfare.

reaction from the 'official' Vietnamese community to this situation raises many issues, which will be dealt with by looking at responses that appeared in the Vietnamese media, together with comments from interviewees. Such an incident provides the opportunity to look at the Vietnamese understanding of democracy, the attitude of Vietnamese to public figures from their own ranks, their thoughts on Vietnam today and the relationship between Australia and Vietnam.

In 1998, Australia and Vietnam have celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This relationship has been a problematic one for many Vietnamese refugees in Austraha, particularly the leadership of the VCA, who oppose the communist regime in Hanoi and fight for human rights and the installation of democracy in Vietnam. In looking at this relationship, it is necessary to acquire some independent sense of what life in Vietnam is like now. Current literature will be reviewed, with an emphasis on the attitudes of the younger generation. In Vietnam, half the population has been born since 1975, and in Australia, there are now an increasing number of young adults who were born in Vietnam, but have been educated in Australia. These young people are the future leaders in their respective communities, so their thoughts and attitudes are worthy of consideration.

This research has been undertaken following three trips to Vietnam, where personal observation has revealed a people who have suffered and are still living under extremely difficult conditions, and yet seem to have a positive outlook on life. There are increasing global influences on life in Vietnam, young people throughout the country are avidly learning English, and there are increasing numbers studying overseas, many in Australia, but with a desire to return home and help develop their country. Vietnamese people living in Australia have come here under enormous difficulties and worked extremely hard to make a new life for themselves and their families. Now, the younger generation is maturing and becoming a source of future leaders. These people can assist the Vietnamese community in Australia to become fuller participants in society, they can work for the wider Australian community and they can also be involved in all types of relations between Australia and Vietnam, thereby helping their homeland develop. It is

through such people that the idea of Australian citizenship will be expanded, so that there can be fuller participation of Vietnamese-Australians within their own community, the wider society and globally.

Chapter 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter analyses the history of citizenship theory generally and in Australia. Current debates, which incorporate notions of multiculturalism and participation in theories of global and multicultural citizenship, are discussed. Ideas of community are considered, particularly within the context of the Vietnamese community associations in Melbourne. The Australia-Vietnam relationship is mentioned, together with a review of some recent studies, the intention being to gain an independent assessment of contemporary life in Vietnam.

Citizenship

General Principles

Citizenship provides membership of a community, with access to benefits but with an obligation to contribute by full participation (Davidson 1997a; Emy 1996; Goldlust 1996; Rubinstein 1995, 1996; Salvaris 1996; Turner 1994).[5] Citizenship theorists still acknowledge the work of British sociologist T.H. Marshall (1950), who prescribed three types of rights, namely civil, political and social, which developed in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries respectively (Castles 1995; Goldlust 1996; Jayasuriya 1991; Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Marshall 1950; Rex 1997a; Rubinstein 1996).[6]

Marshall's body of theory, while still valued, attracts criticism because of its conclusion that citizenship reached its fulfillment in the welfare states of Britain and other Western societies in the mid-Twentieth Century (Davidson 1997b; Hindess 1993; Kymlicka &

[5] At its most basic, citizenship refers to a category of persons granted common 'membership' of a particular society. From the time of its earliest appearance, the status of citizen has signified that the individual has the rights to full membership of, and participation in, an independent political society such as a city, a state, a kingdom, or an empire (Goldlust 1996: 1).

[6] Marshall suggested: 'The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom...By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power...By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society (Marshall 1950: 8).

Norman 1994). Marshall's model describes a passive citizenship in which the citizen is 'a consumer and not a creator of rights' (Davidson 1997a: 31). Moreover, his ideas are seen as relevant only to the experience of white working men and therefore as inadequate in addressing social inequities surrounding gender and ethnicity (Fraser & Gordon 1994). It is therefore said to be necessary to 'supplement (or replace) the passive acceptance of citizenship rights with the active exercise of citizenship responsibilities and virtues, including economic self-reliance, political participation, and even civility' (Kymlicka & Norman 1994: 355). In other words, a changing world has necessitated a redefined citizenship that provides more inclusiveness and demands that all groups have at least the opportunity to participate.

Australian Citizenship

Prior to 1949 there was no Australian citizenship, people were classified as either British subjects or aliens (Davidson 1997a; Goldlust 1996). Between 1949 and the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972, citizen rights remained very limited and the acquisition of citizenship required an abandonment of one's past (Davidson 1997b). The changes that began to occur in the 1970s 'started from the recognition that Australian society was not simply Anglo-Celtic' (Davidson 1997a: 145). Citizenship in Australia has progressed considerably, from 'passive subject' to 'active citizen', and is now readily available to any residents prepared to become Australian citizens (refer Table A1.5). Davidson reinforces this point by noting that many member states of the European Union are 'racked with increasing racism, discrimination against non-nationals and...harsher exclusionary measures than in Australia' (Davidson 1997a: 264).

Yet, citizenship is not even mentioned in the Australian Constitution, suggesting a generally complacent attitude, amongst Australian-born people and their leaders, towards democracy itself (Davidson 1997a; Emy 1996; Salvaris 1996). Perhaps the very stability and relative prosperity of Australia's democratic system results in the citizenry taking the benefits of such society for granted (Emy 1996). Refugees and migrants from Vietnam have taken up Australian citizenship at a very high rate (see Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3). This is predominantly as a consequence of being 'stateless', belonging to no one (Davis

1996b), and is also an indication that they value citizenship and wish to become a part of the Australian community (Kelly 1988). Interview data will support the ideas of commitment and contribution held by Vietnamese-Australians, together with their desire for security and a new life for their families.

Table 1.1 Australian Citizenship – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

	Australian		*Other*		*Not stated*		*Total*		
Age	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
0-4 years	252	237	116	96	43	29	411	362	773
5-9	611	572	294	308	48	43	953	923	1876
10-14	2362	2170	688	585	100	113	3150	2868	6018
15-19	6075	5712	789	720	210	160	7074	6592	13666
20-24	8000	8011	1109	1899	223	253	9332	10163	19495
25-29	8164	7958	1094	1906	241	226	9499	10090	19589
30-34	9176	7945	1014	1290	241	215	10431	9450	19881
35-39	10184	9058	896	1082	188	211	11268	10351	21619
40-44	7624	7917	652	756	155	170	8431	8843	17274
45-49	4568	4655	346	393	75	73	4989	5121	10110
50-54	2673	2412	158	188	38	46	2869	2646	5515
55-59	1861	2039	100	145	27	33	1988	2217	4205
60-64	1497	1873	72	136	21	45	1590	2054	3644
65-69	1479	1641	84	127	29	37	1592	1805	3397
70-74	808	1023	51	86	19	38	878	1147	2025
75 & over	713	994	60	130	19	50	792	1174	1966
Total	**66047**	**64217**	**7523**	**9847**	**1677**	**1742**	**75247**	**75806**	**151053**

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E07 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table 1.2: Australian Citizenship Rates, By Country of Birth, 1996.

Country	*Persons '000*	*Citizenship rate %*	*Standardised citizenship rate (a) %*
Vietnam	151.1	88.5	89.6
Former Yugoslav Republic	175.4	87.5	87.3
Greece	126.5	96.1	87.3
China	111.0	48.6	76.3
Italy	238.2	78.8	65.6
Germany	110.3	75.8	63.1
Netherlands	87.9	77.7	60.4
United Kingdom	1124.0	60.5	57.5
New Zealand	291.4	32.3	38.3
Total overseas born	**3901.9**	**67.8**	**67.8**

(a) The rates of citizenship that would be expected if the population had the same age and period of residence profile as the total overseas born population.

(b) *Source:* ABS, unpublished Census data, 1996 – cited in Year Book Australia 1998, ABS Catalogue No. 1301.0, p. 162.

Table 1.3: **Top ten countries (in order) of former citizenship or nationality of persons granted Australian citizenship, 1983-93.**

1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Britain	Britain	Britain	Britain	Britain
Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam
Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia	New Zealand	New Zealand
Italy	New Zealand	Poland	Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia
New Zealand	Poland	New Zealand	Lebanon	Philippines
Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	China	Malaysia
Greece	Italy	South Africa	Philippines	China
Poland	Greece	Italy	Turkey	Lebanon
South Africa	South Africa	Greece	Poland	Turkey
Lebanon	Turkey	Turkey	South Africa	South Africa
1988-89	***1989-90***	***1990-91***	***1991-92***	***1992-93***
Britain	Britain	Britain	Britain	Britain
Vietnam	Vietnam	Philippines	Vietnam	Vietnam
New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand	Philippines	New Zealand
Philippines	Philippines	Vietnam	New Zealand	Philippines
Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia	China	China
Lebanon	Lebanon	China	Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia
South Africa	China	Lebanon	Lebanon	Lebanon
Malaysia	South Africa	South Africa	Ireland	Turkey
China	Malaysia	Sri Lanka	Fiji	Fiji
Turkey	Sri Lanka	Fiji	Turkey	India

Source: Davidson 1997a: 90.

Current Debates

Increasing globalisation and cultural diversity are stimulating debate on the expansion of citizenship theory. Philosopher Iris Marion Young seeks a 'differentiated citizenship', which incorporates ideas such as affirmative action, but relies on some form of group identification which may be homogenising and repressive (Castles 1997). Charles Taylor posits the links between recognition and identity as vital to our being, noting the uniqueness of each citizen's potential contribution as well as the need for identity to be recognised (Taylor 1992; Castles 1997). According to Taylor, the conflict between the claims of individual rights and the protection of collective identities can be resolved. However, this argument is challenged by political theorist Jürgen Habermas who suggests there is no contradiction: 'everyone is both an individual and a bearer of a collective identity. A democratic state must therefore guarantee rights at both levels' (*cited in* Castles 1997: 13).

Laksiri Jayasuriya draws on the ideas of Marshall in combining the concepts of citizenship and democratic pluralism (Jayasuriya 1990, 1991). He wants better rights for minority groups and greater opportunity for social participation, while contrasting Australia, where there is no guarantee of rights for anyone, with Canada, where 'defined groups such as women, youth, disabled and ethnic minorities were identified in the 1982 Charter of Freedom and Rights' (Jayasuriya 1990: 14). Some writers argue that what is needed for the new millennium is a 'global citizenship' (Falk 1994; Nussbaum 1997). This involves people looking beyond their local boundaries in an attempt to better relate to people in other places and is idealistic in its hopefulness, a quality perhaps possessed by the young future leaders of Australia. Graeme Duncan foresees the influence of the many different groups of people in Australian society as altering our framework, leading to a 'less rigid, more vibrant and genuinely pluralist democracy' (Duncan 1996: 62), and postulates that 'the issue is not so much one of the global citizen but rather one of the multiple citizen who maintains a variety of allegiances and attachments' (*ibid.*: 63). Vietnamese-Australians who possess the ability to think globally while operating within both the Vietnamese and mainstream communities can share their viewpoints and experiences in ways that will enhance the practice of citizenship and benefit all.

Other writers argue for a 'multicultural citizenship' that incorporates an understanding of cultural diversity and difference of needs (Castles 1995; Davidson 1997a, 1997b; Nussbaum 1997; Ten 1996).[7] This type of citizenship would not only allow the migrant voice to be heard where previously it was silenced (Davidson 19977b: 80), it would in fact demand its involvement in argument as a basis of good democracy (Emy 1996; Nussbaum 1997). Davidson laments the exclusion of the voice of the Other from Australian discourse: 'If that voice had been listened to, it would have recited histories and collective memories quite different from that of Australia and expressing different procedures and values for citizens' (Davidson

[7] 'Recognition of group difference and its social meaning implies departing from the idea of all citizens as simply equal individuals and instead seeing them simultaneously as having equal rights as individuals and different needs and wants as members of groups with specific characteristics and social situations (Castles 1995: 16).

1997b: 80). Nancy Viviani, in her comprehensive study of Indochinese people in Australia between 1975 and 1995, highlights the inadequacies of the policies of multiculturalism, preferring a model of 'substantive citizenship' which provides more inclusiveness without relying on ethnicity as the only marker of identity: ' citizenship and equality can encompass the multiple identities that all Australians share (Viviani 1996: 147-148). Society in Australia has changed as cultural diversity has spread, suggesting a necessity to comprehensively debate ideas of citizenship, at the same time ensuring that all groups are included in such deliberation.[8]

Vietnamese in Australia

History

When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, there were only about a thousand Vietnamese living in Australia, a mixture of adopted orphans, Colombo Plan students, private students and some spouses of Australians who had been working in Vietnam (Thomas 1997b: 274). Yet the population in Australia of people with Vietnamese origin in 1998 is about 200,000 (Table A1.3), a rapid increase in a short time (Thomas 1997b). People were accepted as refugees[9] initially and, since 1982, as migrants under family reunion schemes (Kelly 1998: 833). Nancy Viviani describes the four waves of Vietnamese migration to Austraha:

1. Those who left at the end of the war in 1975, mainly with connections to the former regime and therefore likely to suffer from the communists. They were mainly ethnic Vietnamese[10], Catholics and some ethnic Chinese.

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[8] 'Such a society cannot be shaped exclusively from the top – it must be a result of social movements and political action. Active citizenship means constant participation by citizens in decision-making at all levels. The challenge is to bring about changes in representative mechanisms and bureaucratic structures to permit more democracy in more places, for both groups and individuals' (Castles 1997: 21).

[9] The UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (Hollinsworth 1998: 231).

[10] 'The ethnic Vietnamese were mostly a well-educated elite and they formed and continue to form the nucleus of the leadership in the Vietnamese community in Australia because of their early arrival and their social status. They are the political activists in terms of opposition to the communist regime in Vietnam,

2. From 1976 to 1978, smaller numbers, mainly ethnic Vietnamese, a mixed group of 'those caught in refugee camps from the first wave and those who felt the beginnings of political and economic constriction in Vietnam'.
3. Two parts: (a) ethnic Chinese, who left after government closure of private businesses in 1978,
   (b) war between Vietnam and Cambodia in late 1978, together with China's invasion of northern Vietnam in February 1979, led to the first high peak of arrivals from Vietnam, mostly ethnic Chinese traders.
4. Another peak in 1990 and 1991, mainly long term residents of refugee camps (Viviani 1996: 103-104).

D.Cahill observes that: 'These differences in waves of arrival, in social and ethnic traits and in approach to settlement lead to a lack of cohesion in the community and to much factionalisation' (Nguyen and Cahill 1986: 11, *cited in* Viviani 1996: 104).

The ongoing constants in the lives of Vietnamese people, whether in Vietnam or in Australia, are the family and the home. According to former Saigon journalist Phung Thi Hanh, Vietnamese society traditionally 'rests entirely on the solid core of structure of the family, which owes its cohesion to the religious nature of the relationship between the living and the dead' (Phung 1979: 177, *cited in* Hassan *et al.* 1985: 269).[11] In Australia, such tradition has been influenced by the refugee process, which has caused the disintegration of many families, and the impact of Western values. While informal social support networks have provided some assistance (Loh 1988: 836), ideas of family and home are critical in the Vietnamese imagination. Thomas points out that the Vietnamese word for house, *nha*, can also be used to mean spouse, family or the state, indicating the following:

> The social world, the physical environment and the nation are conceptualised as being fundamentally linked. The family is not just viewed as a physical place where several generations dwell, but the actual house and land are often viewed as being inseparable from that family, being invested with the family's history and its presence, being the site of both ancestral bodies and the traces of the work of ancestors in old structures and plantings (Thomas 1997a: 58).

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those who take the most extreme views about non-contact with communist Vietnamese, and those who speak for the community' (Viviani 1996: 103).

[11] 'Indeed, the Vietnamese family consists not only of the living – father, as head of the family, grandparents, the mother and children, the sons and daughters-in-law – but also of all the spirits of the dead as well as those not yet born (Phung 1979: 177, *cited in* Hassan *et al.* 1985: 269).

Home ownership is much sought after by Vietnamese-Australians, as indicated in Table 1.4 (below). While enabling people to adapt to their new country and cope with their loss, it provides evidence of success and permanence, and is symbolic of acceptance into Australian society (*ibid.*: 61).

Table 1.4: Number of Vietnam-born Australian residents purchasing or renting housing, 1996

Type of Housing	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Fully owned	21206	21747	42953
Being purchased	18852	18937	37789
Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme	1616	1603	3219
Rented: Private landlord not in the same household	7757	7510	15267
Rented: Real Estate Agent	9984	9447	19431
Rented: State/Territory Housing Authority	8460	9585	18045
Rented: Community or co-operative housing group	613	666	1279
Rented: Employer – Government	244	279	523
Rented: Employer – Other	194	199	393
Rented: Other	1315	1321	2636
Rented: Not stated	370	347	717
Rented: Total	*28937*	*29354*	*58291*
Being occupied rent free	448	401	849
Being occupied under a life tenure scheme	115	113	228
Other	533	541	1074
Not stated	2635	2604	5239
Total	**74342**	**75300**	**149642**

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E13 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Appendix 1 contains a range of tables that indicate the current situation of the Vietnamese community in Australia. Viviani nominates unemployment as the most important issue affecting Vietnamese-Australians, perceiving the continuation of high rates into the next generation as potentially leading to this group being labelled 'an underclass' (Viviani 1996: 66). She describes a combination of factors that have worked against the Vietnamese in Australia, namely industrial restructuring, three recessions, and either the lack or non-recognition of qualifications, and states that 'compared to earlier migrants, like the Italians and Greeks, this places them in a worse position' (*ibid.*: 79)[12]. She expresses some doubt about the accuracy of the figures, suggesting there are some who work in the 'hidden economy', but that this does little to reduce the severity of the

[12] 'The Italians and Greeks may have had the hard and dirty jobs but at least they had jobs and the prospect of these continuing over the medium term. Many Vietnamese have none of these prospects and, together with some other groups similarly placed, have even fewer chances in an economy that values skills and credentials more highly than at any other time in its history' (Viviani 1996: 79).

problem (*ibid.*: 84). There has been an increase in the number of Vietnamese becoming self-employed, often as a result of being unable to get a job (*ibid.*: 88), but Viviani summarises by saying that:

1. maybe 20-30% are increasing their status, a figure that will increase as more young Vietnamese complete tertiary education,
2. maybe 40% have blue-collar jobs and will not have mobility within their generation,
3. maybe 30-40% are unemployed, mainly young and uneducated, with poor prospects (*ibid.*: 88).

Concluding that youth unemployment overall has to be reduced for the benefit of society generally, Viviani maintains it is vital for the Vietnamese, in particular, to receive:

> the confidence and employment security they need to make the same kind of social transition that earlier migrant groups were able to achieve. The enterprise is worth undertaking, not least because the alternative is unacceptable (*ibid.*: 100).

Community

'Vietnamese community' is a term commonly used as a shorthand way of referring to people of Vietnamese origin, born in either Vietnam or Australia, and now residing in Australia. However, the idea of 'community' can have various interpretations. George Hillery identifies ninety-four different definitions of 'community', with some common themes (Thompson 1971: 24). Nile suggests that 'communities are as much products of the imagination as lived and material realities' and asks why people actually stay together (Nile 1991b: 7), while Rex talks about 'communities of refugees' (Rex 1997b: 275). Max Weber studied the notion of 'ethnic groups' but noted that shared ethnicity, of itself, does not lead to group formation, it is in fact 'political community, however it is organised, which appeals to shared ethnicity and brings it into action' (Guibernau & Rex 1997: 3). Tönnies mentions notions such as kinship, shared language and feelings of belonging together (*ibid.*: 7), aspects of the traditional community associated with rural village hfe (Thompson 1971: 24). Weber considers a 'feeling of belonging together' as the most important facet of a participating community, while Neuwirth interprets Weber's view of community as a 'series of interlocking relationships characterised by a sense of belonging' (*ibid.*: 31), arguing that 'the competition for economic, political or social

interests is viewed as the source of community formation and communal relationships', and promoting the view that Weber allows for the 'possibility of power struggles within the community' (*ibid.*: 33). Eleanor Rogg emphasises the value of a strong ethnic community as a positive force in helping its members adjust to their new society (Rogg 1971). Mandy Thomas writes of networks and notions of connectedness, noting that in ethnicity discourse 'the claim of belonging to a community is often a moment of empowerment and marks the desire of many to be heard' (Thomas 1997a: 29).[13]

Community Associations

Although there is a range of literature concerning ethnic organisations generally, there is a scarcity of material analysing Vietnamese community associations in Melbourne. This dissertation is intended to contribute to this body of work. Freeman (1995) discusses the US situation to highlight the problem of different groups competing for the same resources, a dilemma also evident in Australia, while DiNicola (1984) highlights the difficulty of several groups presenting a united front. Precise figures are not available on the number of Vietnamese community associations in Melbourne, some being more or less formally constituted than others. Thaddeus Nguyen (1990) claims there are over a hundred in Melbourne, Duc Dung Tran (1994) suggests over forty and Mandy Thomas says there has been an

> extraordinary efflorescence of Vietnamese community organisations over the past ten years or so...(and that)...although the family is extremely important to Vietnamese in Australia the pervasive influence of community organisations is enormous (Thomas 1997a: 34).

Appendix 2 provides details of the main Vietnamese community associations in Melbourne. There is very little material to indicate a traditional foundation for similar organisations in Vietnam and what little there is appears contradictory. Mandy Thomas claims there is no such tradition, linking the formation of groups in Melbourne with the refugee process itself

[13] Thomas (1997a: 34) explains: 'Soon after 1975, with the growth of the Vietnamese population in Australia, a sense of "community" developed to provide a sense of a shared identity and to compensate for feelings of loss and separation. Notions of community have also had to be constructed in Australia as people have become aware of their marginal status within the wider society'.

On the other hand, Tim Turpin notes the 1976 findings of A.B. Woodside:

> One cultural theme that has united many Vietnamese loyalties, he (Woodside) says, has been the search for better collective organisation or for more effective 'organised communities' and 'organised groups' with which to overcome the fragmentation of the colonial period and those structural weaknesses of traditional Vietnamese society that colonialism had exposed. The search for methods of organising communities...draws on the traditional importance of communal networks represented by the family, the lineage and the village...The family was the undisputed foundation of Vietnamese society...economically, politically and judicially (Turpin 1984: 18).

M. Loh emphasises the centrality of the extended family to Vietnamese community life, arguing that resettlement in Australia has caused immense disruption to this system, leading to the development of informal social networks initially, followed by more formal associations, the first of which was founded in Canberra in late 1975 (Loh 1988). These groups helped in the early years of settlement, reinforced cultural traditions and have worked with government as ethnic associations. Viviani disagrees with Thomas, suggesting that 'concepts and practices of group association are well developed in Vietnam', but highlights another aspect:

> the concept of an *ethnic* association is a novel and somewhat strange one. Vietnamese had majority status at home...(and)...ethnic associations carried for Vietnamese undesirable connotations, since they symbolised entrenched Chinese power (Viviani 1984: 259).[14]

Rachel Unikoski, in her study of Polish, Dutch and Maltese community organisations in Melbourne, claims that all ethnic communities develop their own organisations as a 'natural, spontaneous social phenomenon. They arise in all national groups to provide something of an extended family or tribe for the new settlers in the strange environment' (Unikoski 1978: 273). They provide a sense of identity, preserve cultures, perpetuate 'political aspirations of those who believe in a return to their restored homeland', and actually constitute a community (*ibid.*: 286-288). It has been essential to Vietnamese refugees to have such organisations to assist them in rebuilding their lives. The idea of

[14] In this thesis, discussion centres around the associations formed by ethnic Vietnamese. As is shown in Table A1.7, over twenty percent of the Vietnam-born population in Australia are ethnic Chinese. When they arrived in Australia, there had been a Chinese presence for many years, so there was already a well-established network of community associations to help in their resettlement. However, the earliest ethnic Vietnamese refugees had to fend for themselves and gradually form such groups.

'homeland politics' is an extremely important part of the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA), together with its welfare role and its place as the umbrella organisation. Several writers suggest that it is time to assess its effectiveness (Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Thomas 1997a; Viviani 1996).

Australia-Vietnam Relations

On February 26, 1973, the Whitlam Government recognised and established diplomatic relations with the then Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) after the Paris Peace Accords. 1998 marks the 'twenty-fifth anniversary of that recognition and of continuous Australian diplomatic representation in Hanoi and Vietnamese representation in Canberra' (Boyd 1998:4). This relationship occurs at several levels, such as diplomacy, education, tourism, cultural exchange, and aid provision, and is seen by both governments as mutually beneficial. During 1998, the Australian Government pledged aid worth $200 million over the next four years, particularly covering education and training, health and infrastructure development (*ibid.*). Trade has expanded in the 1990s to a two-way trade figure in 1996 of $US464 million, and there are increasing numbers of visitors and business people travelling to Vietnam (Coughlan 1995; Thu Huong Nguyen 1996; Table 1.5).

Table 1.5: Departures of Australian Residents to Vietnam – short & long-term – reasons – 1992-97

Calendar Year	*short or long*	*Convention*	*Business*	*Visiting Relatives*	*Holiday*	*Work*	*Education*	*Other*	*Total*
1992	long	-	16	23	6	33	3	7	88
1992	short	15	2423	11313	3573	110	137	798	18369
1993	long	-	73	45	15	59	-	11	203
1993	short	79	4031	15322	5089	513	241	897	26172
1994	long	-	56	59	42	95	13	42	307
1994	short	40	4669	19033	6943	776	220	918	32599
1995	long	-	110	61	48	166	10	73	468
1995	short	255	5677	24782	7704	1109	266	788	40581
1996	long	-	86	71	54	174	8	60	453
1996	short	440	4256	26255	10171	955	283	674	43034
1997	long	-	84	98	78	199	7	59	525
1997	short	237	4763	24997	11166	833	373	938	43307

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, ABS Table OAD-PMTR0023.

Tran Van Tung, the Vietnamese Ambassador to Australia, has spoken positively about this:

> The relationship is further enhanced by the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese living in Australia, many of whom are highly successful and are aiding Australia's prosperity. Many have also returned to Vietnam to develop businesses in their homeland. They are encouraged to build a bridge of friendship between Australia and Vietnam (Tung 1998: 5).

Vietnamese-Australians have a leading role to play in the ongoing development of the multi-faceted relationship between Australia and Vietnam, however, many would suspect these comments as mere political rhetoric. This relationship is problematic for the VCA, which opposes the communist regime in Hanoi and continues to fight for democracy and the cessation of human rights abuses (Coughlan 1995; Logan 1997; Tran 1994). Perhaps an expanded idea of citizenship could provide a basis for better dialogue with Vietnam.

Vietnam Today

Since the *Doi Moi* (renovation) policies introduced in 1986 Vietnam has been changing, albeit slowly. No doubt there is much political reform still needed, but there have been achievements. Two landmark achievements in Vietnam's recent international relations have been the lifting of the US embargo in 1994 (Coughlan 1995) and ASEAN membership in 1995 (EAAU 1997: 1). In January 1998, the US State Department criticised Vietnam's record on human rights, and in September the government released 5,219 prisoners in an amnesty praised by human rights campaigners (Agence France Press 1998; Alexander 1998; Reuters 1998a, b; Yates 1998). Some analysts are sceptical of this action, perceiving it as a cynical move designed to help its international image (Thayer 1998), while others see it as a hopeful first step towards more liberalisation.

Professor Stein Tönnesson, in a report commissioned by the Swedish International Development Authority, says: 'since 1986, Vietnam has been through a radical transformation in its economic, social, cultural and political domain, but Vietnam has not become a democracy' (Tönnesson 1993: 15). Although the average standard of living has

improved for a majority of people, much poverty persists. Freedom has increased, but in a limited manner. Communist party membership is no longer necessary for, nor a guarantee of, success since there has been more emphasis on the market economy. Vietnam is seen as going through a transitional phase in which new thoughts have 'a greater chance of being heard and reflected upon' (*ibid.*: 22).[15]

Tönnesson's thoughts seem to be supported by a recent survey commissioned by the United States Information Agency, which interviewed 1,020 adults, aged 18-64, from five major Vietnamese cities, in May 1998 (United States Information Agency 1998a, b) and found significant optimism, particularly among younger Vietnamese. The main findings of this poll are detailed in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Findings of USIA Survey

- 63% think the economy is healthy now (36% disagree)
- 83% expect an even better economy in the year ahead (31% say much better)
- 10% believe economic conditions will stay the same (5% worse)
- 48% say their own household's economic situation is better now than it was a year ago, 33% see little change, while 18% feel they are in worse shape
- 70% have heard or read at least *a fair amount* about the economic crisis in the region, 60% think it has affected Vietnam's economy
- people see 'widespread corruption' (55%) and 'inadequate banking regulations' (34%) as the most important reasons behind the crisis
- relatively few (13%) blame 'incompetent government leaders', a factor which publics in Japan, South Korea and Thailand cited as a leading cause of the region's problems
- 90% believe that the Vietnamese people are ready for a friendly and cooperative relationship with the US, with only 7% stating they are still hostile towards the US because of the war
- 52% mention the US as the country most favoured if studying abroad, followed by Australia (38%), Japan (24%) and France (24%)

Source: United States Information Agency 1998a, b

Los Angeles Times correspondent in Hanoi, David Lamb, in reporting on these results, emphasises the increasing role of the younger generation:

[15] Tonnesson concludes: 'In today's open environment, increased contact with democratic countries may be extremely important to Vietnam's continued development, not only economically, but also culturally and politically. From a democratic viewpoint it is therefore essential to accommodate Vietnam in its wish to establish closer relations with as many countries as possible' (Tönnesson 1993: 71).

> Vietnam is a country run by the old but shaped by the young. The old are a product of war and communism, the young of peace and economic opportunity. The former fear change, the latter demand it...The reality is that a whopping 80% of Vietnam's 77 million people are younger than forty (Lamb 1998).

In this report, people are predicting that the values of this maturing generation will become the dominant values of Vietnam in ten years. This feeling of optimism is very evident throughout a recent study by David Marr of youth in Vietnam. The following quote from one young woman is a typical one:

> If the mark of being older is to endure what has already been laid out, to avoid competing with anyone, including one's former self, then the mark of youth is always to want to climb upward, to change the status quo, to search, to uncover, to master that which is not yet in hand, that which has yet to be found by anyone (*cited in* Marr 1996: 7).

Robert Templer has recently studied contemporary Vietnam in great detail and concludes:

> What is emerging in Vietnam is a complex, hybrid culture with a multitude of messages, some of which reinforce what the state sees as traditional values, others that seriously undermine them. The reality is that this process has been going on for centuries; there is no pure set of Vietnamese values to undermine. Popular culture will not erode Vietnamese identity, it will remake it and keep it in a state of constant flux (Templer 1998: 351)

Vietnamese culture is dynamic and Vietnam now is a complex society, just as the Vietnamese community in Australia is becoming more diverse. Young people in Vietnam are wanting a say in their country's future, just as young leaders are emerging from the Vietnamese-Australian community. In Vietnam, the predominance of young people is both a catalyst for change and a source of generational tension, as Vietnam has been traditionally been ruled by a gerentocracy. This thesis will use the framework provided by theories of citizenship to assess the Vietnamese-Australian capacity for participation in Australian society. Although there is a body of literature concerning the Vietnamese community in Australia, little has been written regarding the relevance of the community associations to issues of citizenship and participation. Vietnamese-Australians appear to value Australian citizenship, but is their approach active or passive? People take up citizenship but still experience the pull of their former homeland. Is this an impediment to

full participatory membership of society? Are there generational differences regarding such matters? Over the period during which the Vietnamese-Australian community has worked at establishing itself, there has been an ongoing relationship between Australia and Vietnam. Is such a link important and, if so, what is the role of the VCA?

These questions are significant because Australia is a culturally diverse liberal democracy in which everyone should have both the opportunity and the obligation to participate in Australian society. Vietnamese-Australians can enrich the Australian community because of their unique experiences, just as any other group, but need to overcome difficulties. If active in the broader community, people with wide-ranging ideas can promote greater inclusiveness of Vietnamese-Australians within the Australian community. Lateral thinking can foster the relationship between Australia and Vietnam, in turn promoting development of Vietnam. How these matters have been assessed is detailed in the following Chapter on methodology.

Chapter 2 METHODOLOGY

This Chapter describes the use of quahtative research to determine if Vietnamese-Australians do have the opportunity to participate in Australian society. Interviewing was the basic method employed and the list of interviewees and questions is provided, together with the letter of introduction supplied to subjects beforehand. Analysis is discussed, as well as the weaknesses and limitations of qualitative analysis.

Qualitative Research

In-depth active interviews provided the main source of data for this research project. Information was also gathered, and contacts estabhshed, by attendance at various gatherings (Table 2.1). Some issues were potentially sensitive, so it was important, within the context of Vietnamese-Australians, to meet as many people as possible who, in turn, provided introductions to suitable interviewees.

Table 2.1: Gatherings attended by researcher

- Drugs seminar held by the Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association in conjunction with Buoyancy Foundation and the Victorian Government
- Multicultural Harvest Day at Collingwood Children's Farm, organised by AVWWA
- Official launch of the play *Dragon's Lair*, and subsequent attendance at the opening night performance
- Participation in Vietnamese Study Groups
- Tet celebrations at Footscray Park
- Talks by Mai Ho and Tan Le, about their lives in Australia, at Soroptomist Headquarters in South Yarra – in aid of Christina Noble Foundation for the Street Children of Vietnam
- Consultation with several Vietnamese-Australian students at Victoria University
- Asialink Circle Dinner, addressed by Lo Ann Sinclair, who works at Christina Noble Foundation

Several writers in the field of social research suggest that interviewing is the best method for analysing people's 'feelings, attitudes, motivations and aspirations' (Mackay 1998: 10). Others see it as effective because it 'cultivates the most useful of all human capacities – the capacity to learn from others' (Patton 1990: 7). In fact, Peter Mewett

stresses that the social researcher should learn '*from* the people that he or she is studying and *not* merely learn *about* them' (Mewett 1989: 82; italics in original). Qualitative methods are said to allow issues to be researched in great detail without the restriction of predetermined categories of analysis (Patton 1990: 13), while also being regarded as 'rather similar to the interpretive procedures we make use of as we go about our everyday life' (Van Maanen 1990b: 10). Qualitative methodology is relevant for this project because it suits research that is:

> exploratory or descriptive, and that stresses the importance of context, setting, and subjects' frame of reference...It is essential in the study of people to know just how people define the situation in which they find themselves (Marshall & Rossman 1989: 46).

Some key aspects of this method are the value it puts on interviewees' perspectives, the interactive nature of the relationship between the interviewer and the subjects, and the primarily descriptive nature of the research, relying as it does on people's words as the primary data. It has the tendency to produce 'serendipitous findings' (Miles 1990: 117), and should also have a degree of flexibility

Interviews

It may seem obvious that, if you want to discover what people think about certain issues, all you have to do is ask them. There is some truth in this, but a rigid question and answer session has limitations. In this research project, the in-depth interview was used, it being more like a conversation than a more formally structured interview, and lasting between fifty and seventy minutes, as suggested by some writers (Mackay 1998: 10; Marshall & Rossman 1989: 82). This device has been called 'a conversation with a purpose' (Kahn & Cannell 1957: 149). Hugh Mackay argues: 'It's the closest research can come to the feeling and tone of a normal conversation between friends who are sufficiently at ease with each other to be frank and open' (Mackay 1998: 10). The intended research questions necessitated the use of interviewees with the narrative confidence to think about and discuss issues of relevance, so purposeful sampling was utilised:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton 1990: 167).

These cases were selected by opportunistic and chain sampling.[16] Table 2.2 lists the interviewees:

Table 2.2: Interviewees

The following were interviewed for between 50 and 70 minutes:

- **Pauline Truong** - law student at Melbourne University, member of VSA
- **Thang Manh Nguyen** – solicitor, Project Officer at VCA, coordinator of *FACE IT* drugs project with VSA
- **Sang Nguyen** – Labor Party MLC for Melbourne West, first Vietnam-born member of State Parliament
- **Phong Nguyen** – coordinator SICMAA, Unity Party (anti-Hanson) candidate for Senate at October 31st Federal Election
- **Angela Huynh** – Master of Electronic Engineering, Telstra employee
- **Duc Dung Tran** – former Councillor for City of Collingwood, former Commissioner for City of Maribyrnong, part-time Commissioner for Multicultural Commission of Victoria, businessperson
- **Mai Ho** – current Councillor and former Mayor for City of Maribyrnong, businessperson
- **Cam Nguyen** – founding President and current Executive Director, AVWWA
- **Duc Pham** – electrical engineer, member of VSA
- **Dan Wong** – Public Officer, Australian-Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, businessperson
- **Bich Ha** – Community Liaison Officer at North Yarra Community Health Centre, Vice-President VWA
- **Hong Vo** – problem-gambling support worker for Vietnamese community, President VWA
- **Duc Tran** – science graduate, researcher with Victorian Council of Social Services, volunteer for Moral Rearmament
- **Giuong Van Phan** – Associate Professor, Vietnamese language, Department of Asian and International Studies, Victoria University, Footscray campus
- **Quoc Mai** – Special Duties Officer, Asian Squad, Victoria Police
- **Anonymous woman.**

The following were interviewed in informal or social situations:

- **Tan Nguyen** – businessperson, recent Ph.D. graduate
- **Trang Thomas** – Professor of Psychology at RMIT
- **Sarina Pham** – interpreter, cross-cultural awareness teacher
- **Kerry Flattley** – writer, biographer of Mai Ho, member of delegation from the City of Maribyrnong to Ho Chi Minh City to set up 'friendship'
- **Penny Le Petit** – Manager of Community Projects, City of Maribyrnong
- **Peter Higgs** – drug researcher among Vietnamese in Vietnam & Melbourne
- **Giang Nguyen** – member of project steering committee for *FACE IT* drugs project.

[16] 'Opportunistic sampling is a technique in which fieldwork often involves on-the-spot decisions about sampling to take advantage of new opportunities during actual data collection. Snowball or chain sampling is a technique in which the researcher identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview subjects (Patton 1990: 179-183, *cited in* Teasdale-Endebrock 1996: 20).

This selection process is itself an important aspect of research: 'Seeking activated respondents is part and parcel of the active approach to interviewing, not separate from it or primarily a theoretical matter' (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 27). Having selected a range of subjects, interviews were gradually arranged. A few days prior to each meeting, the interviewee was provided with personal particulars of the researcher, details of the research, and a list of topic areas to be discussed (Appendix 3.2). This preliminary contact was important as the first step in the interview process (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 40), allowing the subject time to reflect on the issues to be discussed. According to Walker:

> Researchers are more likely to get good data, and know what data they are getting, if the interviewees are told at the outset what the research topic is, even if initially in relatively broad terms, and why the topic is of interest (Walker 1985: 48).

Both in the letter of introduction and at the interview, the subject was assured that confidentiality would at all times be maintained, and permission to tape the interview was sought, as approved by the ethics committee. Such pledges are important in establishing the trust of the Vietnamese-Australian interviewee. Only two respondents declined to be taped. There was a list of questions to guide the interview (Appendix 3.1), but more as a 'conversational agenda than a procedural directive' (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 76).

In the early stages of the interview, questions were asked that attempted to engage the interest of the subject. As the conversation proceeded, more complex issues could be discussed. Potentially controversial issues were only broached late in the interview, so that 'should the respondent break off, a major portion of the interview (would) have been completed' (Denzin 1978: 114). It was vital in these interviews to make the questions succinct, then listen carefully to what was being said, at the same time looking for any indication of thoughts unspoken (Patton 1990: 140; Wadsworth 1997: 39). It was also important when approaching the interview process to 'shake off self-consciousness, suppress personal opinion, and avoid stereotyping the respondent' (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 11). Another important aspect of such interviewing is that of reciprocity. People give up their time for the intrusion of an interview, so the researcher must be prepared to reciprocate by offering feedback on matters raised by the subject, providing insight into

the researcher's feelings and opinions (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 12; Marshall & Rossman 1989: 69; Wadsworth 1997: 39)[17] Such reciprocity should be a part of any human interaction, but is particularly important here in the building of mutual trust:

> The person being questioned is more or less actively processing you – not just by appearance, but by a myriad of other important clues – to try to find out where you stand in relation to her or his own life world (Wadsworth 1997: 39).

Analysis

As soon as possible after each interview, notes were written in a journal. For the two interviews that were not taped, this was from notes taken during the interviews. For the other interviews, the tapes were transcribed into this journal. Some analysis was made in conjunction with this process, comments being jotted down alongside the transcription (Gans 1962: 338; Marshall & Rossman 1989: 112). Responses were recorded on different coloured index cards, each colour representing a particular theme (Gans 1962: 344). This enabled the voluminous amount of material generated by the interviews to be put into a systematic form, able to be analysed. In other words, data reduction to manageable chunks enables interpretation 'as the researcher brings meaning and insight to the words and acts of the participants in the study' (Marshall & Rossman 1989: 114).[18]

Analysis involves finding categories, trends, themes, patterns or repeated relationships that then have to be interpreted, a process known as 'analysing the variables' (refer Table 2.3). After completion of this process, it is possible to test a hypothesis against the data, using the evidence that has been gathered to produce some conclusions. As Wadsworth suggests, one cannot prove anything in social research because there are too many uncontrollable variables, but it is possible to present evidence in support of a hypothesis and come to reasonable conclusions as a result (Wadsworth 1997: 81).

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[17] Several interviewees were quite curious about my interest in studying Vietnam, Vietnamese-Australians, and Vietnamese language. Some even suggested a career in politics, with the aim of representing Vietnamese-Australians in the broader community.

[18] There is a computer software package available for qualitative analysis, but the decision was made that there was insufficient time available to devote to mastering the program. The limited number of interviewees enabled effective manual analysis. The intention is to make use of the computer program in any further research endeavour.

Table 2.3: Analysing the variables

- What things came through?
- What did people seem to be saying regularly?
- What did you keep hearing or noticing?
- What kinds of people seem to say or do what kinds of things under what kinds of conditions?
- Who thinks or does what most often?
- What sense do we make of it all?
- What should we conclude?

Source: Wadsworth 1997: 81

Weakness and Limitations

Qualitative methodology is a labour-intensive process in which the collection and analysis of data is very time-consuming (Miles 1990: 118). Because this research project was undertaken over a period of about nine months, time limitations severely restricted the number of subjects that could have been interviewed. This was the first research of its type undertaken by this writer, so inexperience as an interviewer means that there may have been aspects of the process overlooked. There is also the need to be wary of subjectivity, both when interviewing people and analysing data.

As mentioned earlier, an interview is a personal interaction. In such a situation, trust and cooperation are essential. Some subjects may lack confidence in the relationship and may be reticent to share information willingly. It is up to the interviewer to be alert to such an attitude and attempt to overcome it by skilful questioning and listening.[19] In attempting to gather research material by interviewing Vietnamese-Australians, it is very important to have patience in building a relationship, particularly if the Vietnamese subject harbours some doubts about the non-Vietnamese interviewer. Most of the interviewees wanted to know how they had been selected, valuing the fact that they had been suggested by

[19] One interviewee was quite suspicious and, as a result, reticent in the early stages of the interview, but gradually warmed to the occasion. After about fifty minutes, he commented that he was now 'really interested', and this was coming through in our improved level of communication. However, he had another appointment immediately afterwards, so we had only five minutes remaining.

someone they either knew personally or of whom they were aware.[20] In other words, the use of networks is important within the Vietnamese-Australian community.

Chapter 3 will begin the analysis of the material which emanated from the interviews, examining the interviewees' thoughts on Australian citizenship and its implications, together with impediments to participation that have been encountered.

[20] In the difficult interview previously mentioned, the person who had given me the subject's name advised me after several weeks that they had subsequently discussed the interview. When the interviewee realised there was a friendship with my informant, he expressed an enthusiastic response to the interview and the actual research.

Chapter 3 CITIZENSHIP and BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

This Chapter explores the motivation behind the high uptake of Australian citizenship by Vietnamese refugees and migrants, and seeks to uncover a deeper interpretation of its meaning, beyond the passive acceptance of rights and responsibilities. Barriers to participation are also considered, particularly any tension produced as a result of becoming an Australian citizen while retaining a strong connection with the homeland, either at an emotional or political level. Obstacles such as English language difficulties and racism are also reviewed.

Citizenship

Reasons

As was demonstrated in the literature review, Vietnamese-Australians have taken up Australian citizenship at a greater rate than any other migrant group. When interviewees were asked about the reasons for such an enthusiastic uptake of citizenship, there seemed to be several recurring themes. Phong Nguyen, coordinator of SICMAA, says that he arrived in Australia in 1978 to discover that he was *'stateless, nobody, a non-citizen'*. He uses the image of a sighted person, who becomes blind then regains the ability to see, to explain the feelings felt by himself and many others about their loss of freedom and its subsequent retrieval. What is found again is enjoyed and treasured.

Mai Ho, councillor and former mayor of the City of Maribyrnong, and mother of the 1998 Young Australian of the Year, Tan Le, also mentions the sense of gratitude felt by people towards Australia: *'That is one way they express their feeling and love towards Australia, by becoming Australian citizens... Vietnamese do not take being accepted here for granted'*. This idea of acceptance was mentioned by several subjects, as was the notion of belonging to Australia. Sang Nguyen, Victorian Labor MP, says that *'the feeling is to be part of Australia'*. Dan Wong, public officer of the Australian-Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AVCCI), expresses similar sentiments: *If I was not Australian, I would not know what to call myself, but still people look at me in a different way'*.

53 year old Quoc Mai came to Australia seventeen years ago and states: *'We consider we belong to the country and we are committed to the country. Most of the people here in Australia were living under the communist regime. They want to forget it...We are protected by the law'.* This last comment alludes to the rights, responsibilities and benefits that go with Australian citizenship. Thang Nguyen, 51 years old, maintains that most Vietnamese become citizens because they want to contribute to Australia, but also says that *'they want to enjoy full rights and privileges, as all Australians'.* These are benefits such as access to social security, employment and the right to vote at elections. Bich Ha, about 35 years old, and settled in Australia for 14 years, explains:

> *They want to be seen as someone who is part of the Australian community, with rights and responsibilities. Without that citizenship they don't feel they can be a part, because you have the right to vote, for example, that's one of the rights.*

People also seek the security of being able to travel internationally with an Australian passport, although some interviewees, particularly those who held prominent positions in the South Vietnamese military structure prior to 1975, are adamant that they could not rely on such protection if they were to travel to Vietnam. It is unclear whether or not such fears are soundly based.

Commitment

A common theme expressed in interviews was that Vietnamese want to have a commitment to Australia and want to be seen as such by the general population. Dung Tran, who is in his early 30s, and has been in Australia for seventeen years, believes strongly in the idea that Vietnamese put the 'country' first. He suggests this notion has been transferred to life in Australia: *'The most noble thing you can do as a citizen is really being active, to participate in the building of your country'.*

Phong Nguyen expands the concept by referring to people such as the supporters of One Nation leader Pauline Hanson, who may question the commitment of migrants to Australia. He feels they should be more concerned about the loyalty of the Australian-born than refugees, who *'choose to live here, do not want to be blind again and understand freedom'.* Those who are born in Australia are here *'by accident'*, and if

Australia was under threat *'migrants would be the first to defend the country'*. This demonstrates starkly the contrast between people such as Pauline Hanson, who are fighting the forces of change and difference, and people such as Vietnamese refugees, who understand the value of citizenship in a country like Australia and would fight to preserve freedom.

Apathy of Australian-born

Several interviewees commented that most Australians have taken citizenship for granted. Phong Nguyen feels that the commitment of this group has not been tested by the threat of mass invasion, so they are *'very casual about citizenship, take it for granted and lack respect for the flag (for example, by wearing shorts that have the flag on them)'*. Phong admits this is *'human nature'*, conceding that *'in Vietnam, I did not question citizenship, only here'*. Duc Tran, a 23-year-old science graduate, who came here in 1979 and has been educated solely in the Australian system, adds to Phong's views when he suggests that *'Australians have an idea of what their rights are as citizens but do not have an understanding of what responsibility entails'*. He argues that, if there was greater participation in Australian society by Vietnamese people and other sectors of the community, mainstream Australians could learn about the refugee experience, refugees could learn more about life in Australia, ideas and emotions would be exchanged and people would think more deeply about their own lives and their country. Clearly, there can be negative outcomes from such a process, and people who would support One-Nation dismiss such ideas, relying instead on what Phong calls a *'false nationalism'*. However, Australians need to learn how to be good citizens, not how to hate the 'other'.

Active Citizenship

For people to participate in Australian society as active citizens entails an understanding of citizenship. Tan Le is a young person with leadership qualities who thinks that civics education is a worthwhile activity: *'We need to tell people how to be citizens...We should understand the Constitution, so we can participate and not be controlled, manipulated by the politicians.'* If people are informed and interested, they can influence the important decisions which affect our society. Phong Nguyen supports this argument:

> *If you handle citizenship right, living it, not just talking, you make a change...We have let politicians determine what type of citizenship we have. We must take control back from the politicians, who treat us like idiots.*

Such sentiments are also expressed by One Nation supporters, but in a negative way. This discussion takes the positive approach, so that all members of the community are included and involved in the decision-making process. Phong Nguyen has backed up his statements with action by standing as a Unity Party[21] candidate for a Senate seat at the October 1998 election, a move intended to deny One Nation any electoral success.

Discussions with some second-generation Vietnamese-Australians, that is, those who have received most or all of their education in the Australian system, reveal some very positive attitudes towards the future. Ideas connected with multiculturalism and globalisation seem to come together in their thoughts on the meaning of citizenship and how they can participate in and contribute to society. Duc Tran expresses such views as follows:

> *The (Vietnamese) community in Australia is growing up. It's no good being bound to a way of thinking. The wider world. People like myself are growing up with concepts of global citizenship that we have to deal with. The barrier between what's local and what's global is less clear. We don't need to be bound to the big stories, whether it be socialism or capitalism, these have their problems...These are the issues ethnic young people from bicultural backgrounds need to deal with if they are to represent their community, Vietnam and Australia. Unfortunately, these older people, the leaders now in the community who stand for a sort of idealism, need to appreciate the change.*

It is a youthful idealism that is aware of globalisation, cultural diversity and citizenship, perceives both problems and opportunities in these changing times, and approaches the future with an enthusiastic optimism. Such young people have a respect for the traditions of the past but are not over-awed by them. Of course, there are also many other Vietnamese-Australians growing up without the benefits of a quality education or even the support of a family, and consequently experiencing serious problems. Duc Tran

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[21] The Unity Party was formed in August 1998 to oppose the policies of One Nation and give a voice to people who support multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance. Jason Yat-Sen Li, a 27-year-old lawyer who was a delegate at the Constitutional Convention, is one of the leaders of the new Party. In Victoria, Phong Nguyen stood as number two on the Unity Party Senate ticket. This group was headed by Bill Cope and included some other well known supporters of multiculturalism, such as Mary Kalantzis and Wellington Lee.

speaks as a future leader, but also as a member of the elite. Such people have the opportunity to embrace a more inclusive citizenship and, in turn, direct their energy towards improving the situation of disadvantaged citizens.

Barriers to Participation

Pull of Homeland – Emotional

Vietnamese culture has ancient foundations based on deep familial links to the past. It is only natural that there is an emotional pull from the homeland, a tension between being an Australian citizen yet having a Vietnamese heritage. This applies particularly to the first generation Vietnamese-Australians:

> *The first-generation have spent more than half their life in Vietnam so naturally they miss it. But, I don't think there is conflict Vietnamese people want to settle down as soon as they can, get a job, buy a house. Vietnamese have very high percentage of home ownership, reflects the process of integration. First-generation still keeps their past experience, that is why they want Vietnam to be secure (Duc Tran).*

Mai Ho says it is very difficult to adjust at first:

> *You must get used to daily life. In heart and mind, Vietnam is 'over there', but you must work hard and make a new start. It took me five years to overcome the haunting memories – war, home, school, friends – make new friends here. Ten years to settle well.*

Duc Pham is 25 years old, the youngest of ten children, involved in the Vietnamese Students Association (VSA), and went back to visit Vietnam four years ago. One would expect him to express the views of young people, but he is emotional about this issue:

> *This is one of the biggest problems...Vietnamese people miss what they don't have...Many may be successful and can live here as any other Australian, but inside, in their hearts, they feel deeply that one day they want to go back there...I feel more about my people, because they have suffered so long. Sometimes I have tears in my eyes because I don't understand why we are still suffering. We died for freedom, the nation, the country, and now we still die. We still have not achieved spiritually what our ancestors want.*

To this writer, whose whole life has been lived in an Australia at relative peace, such a heartfelt expression of love for one's homeland is complex and difficult to understand.

That it has come from someone so young is an indication of the strong connection Vietnamese do have to their family, country, culture and history. It is also relevant to note that Duc came to Australia as a 14-year-old, so most of his schooling was undertaken in Vietnam. It could be argued that Vietnamese-Australians of a similar age, but who have been educated here, might have a different attitude to this matter.

Some subjects spoke of their children having taken trips back to Vietnam to visit relatives and see the country. Cam Nguyen, president and founder of the AVWWA, notes that *'when the children go back to Vietnam, it is more than just tourism'*. Bich Ha sees it as important that children go to Vietnam:

> *They went back last year; they enjoyed, saw big family and felt a sense of belonging. Now they know where we have been brought up. You are Vietnamese, whatever your citizenship, whether you are born in Australia, your ancestors belong to Vietnam.*

In a superficial sense, such comments could suggest some problems with being an Australian citizen, but Bich is in fact a good example of someone who is working extremely well in two cultures. She helps people from many ethnic groups, not only Vietnamese, participate in Australian society more fully. At the same time, she believes strongly in preserving and promoting traditional Vietnamese culture, particularly by organising cultural functions through the Vietnamese Women's Association (VWA):

> *They know they belong there. Speaking the language is very important, knowing the culture is very important, and I think our kids are proud to be Vietnamese-Australians...Some parents think that to integrate, they must turn away from the culture.*

It is important that Vietnamese people maintain their culture as much as possible while also participating in Australian cultural life and contributing to Australian society. This is what multiculturalism and associated policies are about. However, while the older generation stresses the importance of Vietnamese traditional culture as a central feature of their lives, for many younger people there can be problems of identity.

Duc Tran has spent some considerable time studying the issue of identity:

> *Second-generation Vietnamese-Australians (that is, those educated here) strive for a sense of belonging whereas Anglo-Celtic youth strive for a sense of worth...We can actually function quite well in both cultures, Australian and Vietnamese cultural context, because it's about belonging, where we fit in. If we're comfortable 'here', we can adapt. The issue is when there is an expectation imposed on where you are meant to be. If you are meant to be Australian, then there is a strong expectation of what authentically is a bicultural person. You can't belong to one when you are two. That is where the tension is. It is obvious if you talk to any young person, at high school. It is identity, the struggle to find independence, self, security. These are problems.*

Pull of Homeland – Political

Vietnamese-Australians are *'very sensitive to matters regarding the nationalist-communist battle'* (Tan Nguyen). People have come here as refugees to escape from the regime in Hanoi, so naturally do not support the government. This will be discussed further when considering the VCA, but suffice to say there is a range of views within the Vietnamese-Australian community. Some see change in Vietnam as extremely slow: *'Foreigners see change, in fact only economic opening, still stifles freedom'* (Thang Nguyen). Others admit that change is certainly slow, but is happening, particularly as Vietnam becomes more integrated regionally and globally. Sang Nguyen comments:

> *Some people still want to fight for democracy and so on, but now the world is different. It's easy now to liaise, make contact with Vietnam. Before, everything was controlled, now things are improving".*

Some people, such as Thang Nguyen, celebrate freedom in Australia: *'Here in Australia we are free to talk anything we like, but not in Vietnam'*. Others feel their freedom to speak out on homeland political matters is restricted by some in the community. Dan Wong, for example, questions whether the SBS radio Vietnamese language program is government or Vietnamese-funded:

> *You can't use the money of the government to push your cause. It sends a message to the Vietnamese government that the Australian government supports this message...All they have is anti-communist message...People are too scared to challenge this view because, if you disagree, you become communist...SBS, VCA, etc. keep pounding some distorted idea into the people's minds...Australian government sees the VCA as 'the community', but when you consult any particular organisation about a particular issue you have to know the background of that organisation.*

Language

If anyone wishes to participate fully in Australian society, some knowledge of English is essential. Phong Nguyen notes that a command of English will bring more success and empowerment than will mere intelligence: '*Language is crucial for one to exercise citizenship. A person may be intellectual, but lack English...The power of language*'. Again, there is a generational distinction, older people finding it more difficult than the young to learn, especially because their early years here have had to be devoted to re-establishing themselves and making a new home for the family. Those who have been educated in Australia have had the chance to learn two languages as children, a great advantage. Tan Le believes that *'English is easy to learn if at school here from the beginning, difficult if you came here as an adult'*.

Related to the difficulties associated with language deficiencies is the lack of knowledge of the Australian political and legal system. Mai Ho sees many people as *'scared of politics because they don't understand enough of the system yet'*. This helps to explain the reticence encountered when the research for this project began. People were asked their thoughts on politics, but expressed a complete lack of interest in the subject, or at least in discussing their views with an 'anonymous' researcher. Conflicting answers were given to such questioning, some suggesting there was a traditional view of Vietnamese regarding the *'politics of being left alone'*. This approach is contained within a Confucian framework, with the scholars at the top and politics considered as an activity for such an elite, while the ordinary person just gets on with daily life. The minority of first-generation Vietnamese-Australians who have received a significant education are said to have some interest, but the rest are held back from participating because of their poor Enghsh and lack of awareness. Because they feel powerless, they keep quiet (Tan Nguyen).

Another significant factor affecting the chances of people learning English and understanding the system is the level of education previously received in Vietnam. If one has not been formally educated in one's native language, it makes the acquisition of a

second language extremely difficult. Duc Tran speaks about his forty-year-old mother, who received little formal education in VN:

> *She prefers to be within her network...A lot of the motivation to go out of your ethnic boundaries is influenced by your educational experience in Vietnam. Those bureaucrats like Cam Nguyen and scholars like Trang Thomas have the opportunity to experience international contacts...I think she would like to participate more, but she finds it difficult to understand. She is held back by lack of formal education more than anything else.*

There is no doubt that poor English and a lack of education can be a barrier to participating fully in Australian hfe. However, a command of English is not necessarily a guarantee of success, as suggested in this further comment by Duc Pham:

> *I can fit in here OK, not perfectly, but OK. I can never be completely Australian. I can speak English, find a job, eat Australian food, understand, but somehow I am still too much Vietnamese. Many Australians still don't think of us as Australian...Hanson has made things worse. We feel rejected, therefore don't fit in...Also, life here is too much about money, individualism.*

Racism and 'Hansonism'

Discussion of these issues with the interviewees reveals conflicting attitudes. Everybody has encountered racism at some time, but few consider it a problem, and most claim it has not become more frequent in recent years. Angela Huynh, a woman in her mid-30s, wrote a letter to *The Age* (9 July, 1998) about the pain she had felt because of Hanson, after living here for 19 years: '*All that time I've learned to regard Australia as the only country where I belong. One Nation once again made me feel that I should escape this country like I did 16 years ago on a boat'.* In a subsequent interview with Angela, she described the Vietnamese community as feeling rejected and unwelcome. She notes that the Vietnamese-language media have provided the forum for much discussion of these issues by Vietnamese people who will, in time, gain enough awareness and confidence to express their opinions in the mainstream English language media. However, other people were less concerned about racism. Giuong Van Phan says: '*in daily life situations it depends on the individual relationships. Some discrimination some time, but I don't think in Australia it is a big problem'.*

Cam Nguyen has written articles that discuss racism (1989, 1990) but, when interviewed for this thesis, made the comment that she had recently declined an invitation to take part in a radio forum concerning racism because she felt she had nothing to contribute. She perceives the general feeling among some three hundred members of AVWWA to be: '*For every one unpleasant incident they can think of hundreds where people are nice and kind*'. Dan Wong feels it is necessary to take personal responsibility in dealing with the issue: '*it depends to a large extent on how I think. If I always say that people won't accept me, then they won't accept me*'. In other words, people need to be pro-active, involve themselves in society, challenge opponents, and fight for acceptance. Where there is a chance for people to get to know each other at a personal level, there is the opportunity to gain a mutual understanding of each other's position. Such knowledge can then be transferred to other people, eventually permeating the whole community.

It appears that there has been much lateral thinking on the issue of racism and how to counteract 'Hansonism'. Dung Tran acknowledges the concerns of many people, particularly the lesser educated and those from lower socio-economic classes, who are worried about the current times of change and uncertainty. He claims it is *'wrong to condemn Hanson too quickly as 'racist'...People want answers and solutions to uncertain life'*. He is not suggesting she is not racist, but that such labelling tends to overpower the debate, not allowing it to progress past the level of personal abuse. Hong Vo, who is in the mid-30s and has been in Australia for 16 years, expresses her opinion:

> *What Pauline Hanson is doing is very old-fashioned in a way, blaming the victim for example. There are a lot of reasons that people can't help themselves and they need support from the outside world. It is our job to help people overcome their problems. You can't ignore a person in the community, in the society. All of society must help the people...Criticism is healthy, so long as it is constructive. When you criticise people you need to help them with the solution.*

Duc Tran says that he

> *Can understand Hanson's 'appeal', but she doesn't include the facts. You need to talk in a balanced way. Everyone worldwide is going through a very stressful era with much change, middle-class getting smaller and smaller, upper echelon richer and richer, more*

> *of a lower class, people on a pension. She mustn't marginalise a group in the community, but should look at things in a broader sense.*

Others acknowledge her democratic right to speak, but emphasise that her pubhc utterances must be responsible. Many have ideas about strategies to counteract Hansonism, such as combining forces with other ethnic communities to demonstrate, holding multicultural activities at the same time as One Nation public meetings, and to debate her using 'common language', not the academic elite. Perhaps the most relevant, and prophetic, suggestion came from Quoc Mai in an interview conducted before the federal election had been announced: *'The best way is by the voting. Do not vote for her'.*

Education is a theme that came through strongly during the interviews. Dan Wong feels deeply: '*Everything can be educated. What kind of society do we want? There is nothing more effective than starting from childhood. School curriculum must teach about racism'.* Within the multicultural school community, people of different ethnic backgrounds can exchange their stories, learn about each other, and contribute. Hong Vo and Bich Ha talk about the two primary schools their children attend, both of which have much diversity and actively promote understanding, forgiveness and cross-cultural issues. At one of these schools, all the children were learning about Vietnam:

> *It is a chance for everyone to participate, breaking down the barriers. Now learning Vietnamese history, culture, etc. As parents, we feel we have to contribute something ...At school they asked the kids to write something about Pauline Hanson. What do you know about her? Why is she in the news? They had to go back, discuss it with their parents, then write it down (Bich Ha).*

There are paradoxes concerning the rise to prominence of Pauline Hanson and the One-Nation Party. On the one hand, the people who have supported her ideas have done so because they feel 'excluded', denied the chance to participate in the decisions of government which affect their lives. Yet, it is citizenship itself that enables them to now actively support this political party. On the other hand, racism and Hansonism have restricted the full participation of Vietnamese-Australians. Yet, it is this very exclusion which could motivate them to more actively play a role in society, defending the community and its contribution. Dan Wong suggests that *'everyone has a role to play,*

talk to people in a constructive way'. Duc Tran indicates the increasing importance of the second-generation Vietnamese-Australians, whom he nominates as the future leaders:

> *If we say anything at all, we're going to be knocked back, but that's just victim thinking and that's not going to help us at all. Either we say something and we learn from it or we might as well give up...We need people who can actually articulate the positive view, but people who have the knowledge and resources to do that...A lot of us, and organisations, who are mainstreaming ourselves, will develop the bridges, provide the opportunities or the channels for us to communicate our ideas and to represent the community in a balanced way.*

These young adults envisage a future society in which more people will participate to a greater extent within an expanded framework of inclusive citizenship. Chapter 4 considers the Vietnamese community associations, in Melbourne, to assess their effectiveness.

Chapter 4 VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

This Chapter examines the Vietnamese community associations, by using material from the interviews, to determine their effectiveness in enabling Vietnamese-Australians to participate in Australian society. These organisations have aims and objectives that suggest there exists a desire to assist people become a part of the broader community. However, some members of the Vietnamese-Australian community still concentrate on homeland politics, rather than the implementation of the stated aims. Details of the main associations are provided in Appendix 2.

Vietnamese Community in Australia – Victorian Chapter (VCA)

This association has positioned itself as the umbrella organisation of the Vietnamese-Australian community. If the government wishes to consult with the Vietnamese in Australia, it calls on the VCA. However, some interviewees have suggested that while this occurs officially, behind the scenes there are other organisations, with proven performance, being more actively consulted. The VCA aims to work for democracy and human rights in Vietnam, together with removal of the communist regime. It also has as its objective the welfare of Vietnamese in Australia. Thang Nguyen, of the VCA, suggests that *'every Vietnamese in Australia, he or she, becomes automatically a member'*. However, the dogmatic nature of such a statement immediately arouses suspicion about any other utterances emanating from the VCA. There is no doubt that there are some people who agree with the point of view of the VCA and others who do not. Such opinions and attitudes vary according to gender, generation, length of time in Australia, socio-economic status and level of education received, both in Vietnam and Australia. As Giuong Van Phan says: *'Their point of view is not exactly the point of view of the community, because the community is now more complex, growing up'*.

The VCA has recently joined forces with the Vietnamese Students Association (VSA) to promote the *FACE IT* drug education and prevention project (Appendices 2 & 4). At the official launch of the associated play, *Dragon's Lair*, this writer complimented Giang Nguyen, 25 years old, former member of VSA executive and now coordinator of the

project steering committee, on the fact that the younger and older generations were able to work together on such a project. She agreed, but noted that it had been a difficult and very gradual process. Phong Nguyen, one of the coordinators of this project and a former President of VSA repeated this sentiment. At the launch, he commented that this was a historic fulfillment of his dream that young people should be able to do things for themselves, noting that VSA members and ex-students have been visionary in their approach. He sees the program as a great step forward, observing that '*Vietnamese are part of the problem, but are also part of the solution*'.

David Nguyen, one of the young writers of this play, refers to the term 'chasing', which means 'looking for drugs', identifying this as a metaphor for people searching for something, some answers to their existence, and says that his aim is to satisfy the need for the people watching this play to *'feel what these kids feel'*. Thanh Vu Nguyen, co-writer, sees the play as breaking down language barriers by uniting different cultures. He appreciates the past, but emphasises the point that

> *We are a new generation with no history to repeat but a future to create. The play is about Vietnamese kids, drug culture, and stories on the road. But the Vietnamese community is part of the wider community...It is not just Vietnamese and kids, but all suffer.*

It appears that such involvement by the VCA is considered by some to be belated, as several interviewees suggested it has missed opportunities in the past to help Vietnamese participate in Australian society. There was also criticism of their structure, predominance of male leaders, and lack of professionalism. As one female interviewee said:

> *The VCA should be the biggest community association, but they must be more professional. We are not emerging like the African community. We have been here some twenty years, so should have decent meeting places...(There is)...utter lack of leadership, they are all self-seeking...(VCA)...does little to help people participate in Australian society.*

Others question the right of the VCA to act as representative of the Vietnamese community. Dan Wong asks: '*What are you? If you say you are the representative of*

every single Vietnamese, I don't believe you. If you are not, why should I consult you?' Duc Tran takes the issue further, connecting it to the growing complexity of this maturing community, and asking the question:

> *How to determine the right to represent? The VCA is meant to be the representative of the community but has many problems, especially administrative, therefore is not truly representative. Many other organisations are taking the lead, absorbing government funding...Politics of whether the VCA is capable of representing the trends in our community, the nature of our community now.*

It is significant that young leaders such as Duc Tran appear to be emerging. They are aware of the Vietnamese past, conscious of the need for Vietnamese-Australians to have the opportunity to take part in Australian society, able to identify inadequacies in the structures of the Vietnamese-Australian community, and prepared to look forward in a positive manner. At the same time, there are people who, while sympathetic to the immense suffering and upheaval suffered by people in the war and as refugees, now see the VCA, and its ongoing struggle against the communist Hanoi regime, as backward-looking. Mai Ho is a notable critic: '*The VCA and others are bitter. This is understandable, but the war finished twenty three years ago. Why tell children to hate Vietnam and those people? The world is globalising. They must appreciate this, but do not want to'*. Some are even more outspoken, seeing beyond the VCA arguments. Dan Wong explains:

> *They portray themselves as anti-Vietnamese government, see themselves in position of high status, a minority manipulating the silent majority. These people see themselves as leaders in a future Vietnam, but if they understand democracy, must not use force. They are backward-looking...Human psychology sees the past as a nice beautiful tapestry, an unreal image...These are people living in the past who have not assimilated into society here. The government thirty years ago was not good, it was worse than now...These people have not been prepared to assimilate, to talk to Australian people about themselves, and learn from them. They are just backward, withdrawn in small community, set themselves up as important...Many people don't like VCA. I could start my own VCA.*

Dan Wong paints a picture of people living in an imagined, unchanging society. In fact, society in both Vietnam and Australia has changed. He is emphasising the need for people to be active in society, talking to other people and sharing ideas. While he

specifically refers to this occurring at a personal level, this can also be interpreted as central to the relationship between Australia and Vietnam.

Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association (AVWWA)

Cam Nguyen, whose husband was the first president of the VCA (Melbourne), founded the AVWWA, in January 1983, because

> *VCA not doing a good job...Instead of helping our community settle and become a part of society, all it does is look back at Vietnam...It fails to make our community strong and prosperous and accepted...(VCA sees it's role as)...gatekeeper, rather than helping here.*

Cam wanted an association to counteract the patriarchal nature of traditional Vietnamese life, by showing that '*women can take responsibility and, by taking responsibility, learn skills, learn leadership*'. She claims that the AVWWA is the '*most active Vietnamese community association, not only in Victoria, but in the whole of Australia*', an assertion backed up by Professor Trang Thomas, from her work with the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and supported by figures that show the level of funding achieved. These figures are hsted in Appendix 2, and the program of activities carried out by the AVWWA is listed in Appendix 4. Hong Vo notes that the AVWWA is '*becoming an employment and training centre, welfare resources, not a community association any longer*'. This would appear to be an endorsement of the association's work, suggesting that it has been able to move beyond the Vietnamese community and gain a role in the wider society.

Springvale Indochinese Mutual Assistance Association (SICMAA)

This is one of the oldest Vietnamese community associations in Melbourne, having been formed at about the same time as the AVWWA. It has an extensive program of activities and functions, as can be seen in Appendix 2. Its co-ordinator, Phong Nguyen, is one of the younger leaders in the Vietnamese-Australian community, and has an awareness of both the difficulties faced by members of the community as well as the possible strategies for dealing with such barriers. He has been particularly concerned with the negative stereotyping of Vietnamese-Australians often presented in the mainstream media. He has gradually developed a good relationship with the local media in Springvale, resulting in

the regular publication of positive stories. In fact, the journalists now contact him each week to find out what is happening within the Vietnamese community. Phong explains it in this way: '*Once you engage, the press cannot tell lies anymore. If you do not engage, then you cannot blame the other side for just guessing. Guess is full of subjectivism; guess is full of prejudice*'. This reinforces the opinion expressed by several interviewees that it is important there be an ongoing dialogue between Vietnamese and other Australians, so that people have the opportunity to learn about each other, leading to mutual respect and understanding, which in turn may produce a better society for all.

Vietnamese Students Association (VSA)

VSA operates under the umbrella of the VCA. It has mainly been interested in social and cultural activities, but is changing, for example by *'involvement with other more mainstream groups at Melbourne University'* (Pauline Truong). VSA has about 500 members overall, including 200 at Melbourne University and a small branch at VUT (*ibid.*). The main project undertaken by VSA is the *FACE IT* drugs project mentioned earlier, details of which can be seen in Appendices 2 & 4. There is little printed material put out by the VSA, although they do publish an annual magazine.

Vietnamese Women's Association (VWA)

This has a different focus to the AVWWA, getting closer to women and families at a personal level, helping with problems, maintaining and teaching Vietnamese traditions. They are connected with the VCA, so support their activities but see the need to work for women as their priority. As Hong Vo says, *'we try to empower women, resource them to achieve what they want to do'*.

Australian Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AVCCI)

This group wants to move forward, helping companies and individuals to do business in Vietnam. It supports the Australia-Vietnam relationship, but feels restricted because of the anti-communist stance promoted by the VCA. Dan Wong explains that this prevents business seminars and other events being held in Australia, because government

representatives are not welcomed by the VCA. He sees himself as in a difficult position, and says:

> *Look at the number of people going back to Vietnam, doing business. Even those people who strongly protest are doing business. But, officially they must be seen to be doing something. This is hypocrisy. If you are one hundred percent against the Vietnamese government, I respect you.* (Table 1.5, p. 17).

Community Associations in Vietnam

The interviews were unable to categorically confirm or deny the previously mentioned literature regarding the existence of community associations in Vietnam. Giuong Van Phan says: '*Community associations are not traditional in Vietnam. The strong organisation is the village and village network. In Vietnam now there are several associations but they belong to the government'.* However, Mai Ho suggests that there have been underground associations in Vietnam. She remembers her father being involved in three or four such groups that met on regular Sunday evenings in their home, and says that *'such lively discussions were repeated in many families'.* Giuong Van Phan sees the community associations more as structures devised to adapt to the refugee process than as examples of traditional practices:

> *When they come to Australia they set up associations as symbol, so they can raise issues, partly focus on political problems rather than on other areas. So that in Australia there is one principal organisation, VCA, chapters in each state. But, the leader is not elected democratically, only by people who turn up to meeting. So, it is hard for such people to represent the whole community. They say they do represent but common people say it is not real...One organisation cannot represent whole community, that is why they set up many, many organisations in Australia, women, youth, veterans, etc. They need to get together. A high number are involved in politics rather than social welfare.*

It would appear that, as the Vietnamese-Australian community is becoming more established and increasing in complexity, the relevance of organisations such as the VCA is being increasingly questioned. To illustrate the range of attitudes now held in the community, the next Chapter will focus on a recent controversial issue, the 'friendship' arrangement between District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City and the City of Maribyrnong.

Chapter 5 FRIENDSHIP ARRANGEMENT

This Chapter highlights the complexity of the Vietnamese-Australian community, the tension felt by some Vietnamese between being Australian yet also believing strongly in homeland politics, and the sensitivity of the Australia-Vietnam relationship. Many issues have been raised by the 'friendship' agreement between District 1 of HCMC and the City of Maribyrnong (Appendix 4 contains a copy of this agreement). This Chapter will examine the attitudes of both the VCA and Mai Ho, the criticism and support expressed, and the implications raised.

Background

Mai Ho is a Vietnamese-Australian who arrived as a refugee in 1982, with her mother and two daughters. She worked hard to learn English and improve her life, starting her own business and becoming interested in local politics as a result of observing discrimination against Vietnamese in Australia. After standing unsuccessfully as an Independent candidate she joined the Australian Labor Party, becoming a councillor for the City of Maribyrnong, and eventually achieving the position of mayor in 1997 (Viet 1998). It was in this capacity that she led a delegation, from the City of Maribyrnong, to Vietnam, in March 1998, to set up a 'friendship' between the City of Maribyrnong and District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City (*ibid.*; Vietnam News Agency 1998). An interview she gave to a journalist in HCMC was subsequently reprinted in a Vietnamese-Australian newspaper, *Viet Luan* (Viet 1998). In the article, Mai Ho discussed the difficulties of life as a refugee in a new country, her motivations for entering politics and her impressions of contemporary Vietnam. Her opinion was that there had been much progress and that she saw in the young people there a hopeful future as Vietnam became more integrated globally (*ibid.*).

Matters related to Mai Ho

At about the same time, there arose two other matters relevant to this discussion and of public interest. Firstly, Mai Ho, a sole parent, had previously maintained that her two daughters were her sisters or nieces, her reason being that she wanted to avoid what she

described as the stigma within the Vietnamese community that she considered *'went with being a single-mother...treated as second-class'* (Gough 1998b: 21). The second issue concerned the displaying, without official permission, of former South Vietnamese flags around the Footscray shopping centre one night in April this year. Local shopkeepers complained to council, and Mai Ho promised to investigate, but she also pointed out that it was the wrong way to promote a point of view: *'They think they are promoting democracy but pushing this onto people is an undemocratic thing to do. It does not achieve their aim' (Gough 1998d*: 9). She acknowledged her love of the flag and anthem when growing up, but proclaimed: *'I am in Australia now and my love of Australia is foremost' (ibid.).*

Opposition to 'Friendship' Agreement

Reaction from the Vietnamese-Australian community was swift and plentiful, emanating particularly from the VCA, the leaders of which strongly criticised her interview comments and cited the lack of any potential benefits for Maribyrnong while also bemoaning the apparent lack of consultation. VCA President Thanh Van Le said:

> *Many Vietnamese people were angered by the trip to Vietnam to create a 'friendship' relationship with the communist-ruled city. We oppose the relationship because the fraternity does not bring any benefit to the city and Ms Mai Ho, a type of political refugee herself, has betrayed the ideals of our community's refugees. In a democracy, we should have been consulted (Gough 1998c).*

Mai Ho defended her position by sending a letter to all relevant groups in the Vietnamese community, in which she blamed one-sided media reporting for the criticism. She claimed there was a precedent for the 'friendship', in that a similar arrangement with the central Vietnamese City of Hue had been considered on an earlier occasion. She then listed the benefits of her delegation's trip, also asserting that she had the support of DFAT, Australian universities and various health and charity institutions (Ho 1998).

Over the ensuing weeks, there was an ongoing campaign of protest directed at the 'friendship' agreement. There were meetings between the VCA and Maribyrnong Council (Huong 1998: 18, 19, 21), editorials (*Viet Luan* 1998), letters to editors (Huu

Nguyen 1998: 16-17; Minh Nguyen1998: 8; *Nhan Quyen* 1998a; *Nhan Quyen* 1998b), and an astonishing succession of articles personally vilifying Mai Ho in six issues of the weekly Vietnamese-language, Melbourne-based newspaper *TiVi Tuan San* (Dong 1998a-f). What is especially intriguing about the criticism made by various parties is that, while they do speak in opposition to the 'friendship' agreement, much of the comment is extremely personal. Her relationship with her daughters, together with her attitudes regarding the position of Vietnamese sole parents, have been put together with her response to the 'flag issue', in which critics suggest she is displaying a lack of loyalty towards Vietnam. Some female interviewees thought that Mai's reaction was the problem. If she had not generahsed so much about single mothers, and if she had qualified her comments by stating clearly that they were just her points of view, she would not have received such a response. It was also said by one male interviewee that *'Vietnamese values means they respect morality rather than talents'*, casting doubts on her personal morality.

Vietnamese refugees have suffered and been forced from their war-torn country, so that many continue to possess a hatred of the communist regime. However, the emphasis on using intensely personal attacks, while possibly just another example of the obstacles faced by female politicians in Austraha, does seem to suggest that there is difficulty in sustaining an argument that criticises only the 'friendship' arrangement. It is also unclear how accurately the VCA attitude represents the variety of opinions currently held by Vietnamese-Australians on this and other issues. The general Vietnamese-Australian community now consists of people from different generations, classes and a more diverse range of backgrounds than previously. Attitudes towards the idea of Australia having a relationship with Vietnam, whether it is in the form of this 'friendship' or at the highest diplomatic level, must vary according to these factors.

Support

Some evidence of the range of perspectives held within the increasingly complex Vietnamese-Australian community can be seen in the letters and articles supporting Mai

Ho, and the 'friendship' agreement, that also appeared in the media (Gough 1998a; Ha 1998; The Huynh 1998; Wong 1998). For example, Kiem Ha writes:

> The Australian government has...had a strong regional security and economic interest in Vietnam. Therefore, the friendship agreement between Maribyrnong and Ho Chi Minh City should be regarded as part of a comprehensive and long-term bilateral diplomatic and trade strategy of Australia (Ha 1998: 16).

Ha supports the response of Mai Ho to the flag controversy and proclaims that 'not *all* Vietnamese are anti-Vietnam government' (*ibid.*) (italics in original). This can be interpreted as a 'forward-looking' approach, which has also been taken by others, a significant example being Dan Wong, previously mentioned. He strongly supports the 'friendship' relationship, commenting that:

> Many businesses within our chamber are currently trading with Vietnam and many others wish to establish trade with Vietnam. Such a relationship certainly will enhance business opportunities and facilitate trading...(and create)...a link with Vietnam for Vietnamese-Australians (Wong 1998: 24).

These comments indicate that there are layers making up the Vietnamese-Australian community, just as there are layers within the Australia-Vietnam relationship. Either the VCA is not as representative as it claims, or it has members who are, in fact, privately conducting a relationship with Vietnam, while publicly condemning the 'friendship' agreement arranged by Mai Ho.

Mai Ho says she understands the position and pain of refugees, but looks to the future, seeing the 'bigger picture' (Gough 1998c), an approach which is seen to have at least some support within the general Vietnamese community. In fact, there is a precedent for this situation. In 1994, NSW Premier John Fahey visited Vietnam and

> signed a multi-faceted agreement with the Vietnamese Prime Minister that included the establishment of a 'sister-state' relationship between NSW and Da Nang Province in central Vietnam (Coughlan 1995: 477).

The successful signing of this agreement raises questions regarding the current controversy. An Anglo-Celtic Australian male coordinated the NSW arrangement, whereas a Vietnamese-Australian woman initiated the Maribyrnong 'friendship'. Perhaps

there is some antipathy within the Vietnamese community towards a Vietnamese woman acting in an individuahstic manner. This suggests the strong role played by perceptions in an international relationship, particularly one as historically sensitive as that between Australia and Vietnam.

In any case, the VCA continued its campaign to cancel the 'friendship' agreement, gathering a petition containing 2,347 signatures and succeeding in forcing the council to temporarily 'suspend' the contract, pending further mutual discussion (*Nhan Quyen* 1998c: 1, 56, 57). It is interesting to note that the VCA media report of these activities concluded with the comment that the Maribyrnong Council now 'realises' that it is the VCA, above all others, that is the official voice representing Vietnamese-Australians (*ibid.*). It begs the question as to whether the VCA's actions are motivated because of opposition to the 'friendship' *per se*, or perhaps more as a means of strengthening its position of authority.

When interviewing people several months after these events, there persisted a range of attitudes, some quite passionate, towards the friendship arrangement and Mai Ho herself. Some of this criticism has also become directed towards Mai Ho's daughter, Tan Le. Much of the criticism emphasises Mai's lack of consultation with the Vietnamese community, in itself an indication that the maturity process of the Vietnamese-Australian community appears to incorporate a growing understanding of the Australian system. Mai Ho admits she did not consult the VCA but defends herself by saying:

> *They (VCA) are not democratic, do not know what democracy is...Minority makes loud noise but they don't understand what are the interests of Australia...(They are) backward-looking...Even though we explain this is for the city and businesses within, they would not agree and would demand action on human rights, but in local government we don't talk about human rights...Not wise to tell them how to run their own country...The best way is to sit down and talk.*

On the one hand, this is an attitude of looking to the future with optimism, however, Phong Nguyen has a different approach. He likens her actions to those of the traditional, authoritarian Asian leaders and describes such behaviour as undesirable in Australia:

> *Leaders in Asia dominate, but here we want a say, a collective decision, a citizenship. Don't treat me like a little kid, this is a protest on citizenship. People say 'this is Australia, you must behave in a democratic way'...People don't want to eat the cake that somebody else made for them, they want to know the ingredients and be involved in making it.*

Several interviewees felt she had betrayed her status as a refugee by *'forgetting too soon'* (Angela Huynh). Giuong Van Phan alluded to the difficulties faced by Mai Ho as both a Vietnam-born person and a woman, but also suggested how the whole affair could have been better handled:

> *Such a link with cities in Vietnam is not new...It is normal nowadays. If that relationship promoted by an Australian, no problem...Because she is Vietnamese, she should consult with the Vietnamese. That is process...If the mayor consults with other communities and have a vote, we have to respect the democratic process. If there is a high vote to support the friendship they can go ahead. That is the democratic process.*

This issue has served to highlight the developing complexity within the Vietnamese-Australian community. It is possible for former refugees to participate in the political system and become elected representatives. Such a position necessitates working for the Vietnamese-Australian community, but within the context of the broader society. Citizens of Vietnamese origin are proud to have a member of their community elected *'no matter whether they are good or not'* (Quoc Mai), but will pay attention to the performance of such a representative and are not afraid to criticise if they detect inadequacy. This is an indication of a growing awareness of the Australian liberal democratic system, but also suggests that such people who currently have positions of public prominence may merely signify the potential inherent within this community. As the second generation continues to mature, their ideas and energy will begin to have an influence.

At the same time, the reaction from the 'official' sector of the Vietnamese-Australian community in Melbourne to Mai Ho and her role in the 'friendship' agreement possibly indicates some deficiency in its representative role. There is no doubt that the issues of human rights and democracy in Vietnam are important issues that must be dealt with. However, it is also debatable as to the best way of achieving results. Society is changing in both Vietnam and Australia, as the world is becoming more globalised. Many people,

particularly those of the younger generation, favour continuing dialogue as the gradual method of dealing with such problems. Evident in several interviews has been the feeling that such a different approach by the VCA would enable it to better serve the community in Australia. The views of the second generation should be welcomed in this process, and a tentative start to such cooperation has been made with the *FACE IT* drugs project.

The next Chapter will bring together the various thoughts that have been expressed regarding citizenship and the barriers to participation. Discussion of the 'friendship' arrangement has been useful as a recent case study that illustrates the range of attitudes within the Vietnamese-Australian community. There are people in the community who understand an expanded idea of citizenship and look to the future with optimism, while there are others with a more passive approach.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that Vietnamese-Austrahans value Australian citizenship, regarding it as providing the opportunity to participate fully in society. People wished to leave behind their 'statelessness' and become a part of this country. They are entitled to the same benefits as any other citizen, but particularly express a strong desire to contribute to the development of Australian society. Most Vietnamese-Australians retain strong emotions about the country they had to leave and the family members who stayed behind, or were lost. Because the Vietnamese family is central to traditional culture, such feelings are perfectly natural and should not prevent people participating in society here. There are also many who still have an active interest in homeland politics, in other words, the fight for democracy and human rights in Vietnam, together with removal of the communist regime in Hanoi. Again, it is necessary to appreciate the tragedies and suffering that have been experienced by these people, but this does not mean that their political opinions should be accepted without question. Vietnam has changed and is changing and, at some point, the decision must be made to move forward within the more immediate society, providing more assistance to the local community and participating in the broader Australian society. Austraha and Vietnam have a long-standing relationship within which dialogue occurs and it is important to maintain such communication as the best way of tackling the issues of human rights and democracy in Vietnam.

Examination of the controversy surrounding Mai Ho and the 'friendship' between the City of Maribyrnong and District 1 of HCMC enabled consideration of several issues. It is apparent that Vietnamese-Austrahans wish to see members of their own community becoming elected representatives, but it is also quite clear that their subsequent performance is scrutinised. Criticism of Mai Ho has occurred at two levels, namely personal and political. While some have suggested that the intense personal criticism was received as a result of an arrogant demeanour and questionable personal morality, there are two more plausible explanations. Firstly, it could be seen as another example of female Austrahan public figures being subjected to extreme scrutiny. Secondly, this style of attack suggests that it may not be possible to maintain a convincing argument against

the 'friendship' agreement itself. Mai Ho's failure to follow the correct democratic processes left her open to criticism that has some validity, but the excessive attacks on her character seem unjustified.

This matter serves to highlight the increasing complexity of the Vietnamese-Australian community in Melbourne. Interviews and media reports reveal a range of views within the community, while also pointing to gender and generational differences. There are now growing numbers of educated, second-generation, young adult Vietnamese-Australians who have ideas and want to contribute to their own community, the broader Australian community and internationally, especially in Vietnam. They observe that the world is changing through globalisation and, whereas supporters of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party consider these changes to be very detrimental to people's everyday lives, these young people perceive a range of levels at which there are opportunities to participate in society. They understand citizenship as something that is active and inclusive, and regard participation as vital to the advancement of people's lives. In fact, they possess multiple allegiances, and these citizens will operate in both the Vietnamese-Australian community and the wider Australian community, as well as within the context of the Australia-Vietnam relationship.

The outward-looking nature of their ideas suggests that members of the Vietnamese-Australian community, with representatives such as Mai Ho and Sang Nguyen, have made enormous progress in their settlement, but that such public figures may signify a transitional phase. They have broken the ground, which has provided the opportunity for the younger generation to come forward, but the future lies with the second-generation. The earliest Vietnamese-Australian public representatives have been successful because of their ability to communicate with mainstream Australians and their capacity to come to terms with Australian culture, but they have also relied on the votes of their fellow Vietnamese-Australians. The next generation will benefit from their education and language skills as they assume positions of leadership in various fields. The thoughts expressed by some of the interviewees for this research project suggest that they will approach the future with a sense of idealism. Such optimism must surely expand the

meaning of Australian citizenship because, as Chin Liew Ten summarises, it is vital for society that everyone has the opportunity to participate:

> Participation is not an end in itself, but merely a means to the formulation and promotion of various ends. Human beings can only flourish when they participate in the decisions which shape their lives. Through such participation we join others in co-operative enterprises, building a sense of solidarity and community. We take pride in our community and realise our essential social nature in common and mutually sustaining activities (Ten 1996: 50).

Appendix 1 TABLES

Table A1.1: Number of Vietnam-born settler arrivals by financial year, 1975-76 to 1995-96.

Financial Year	*Settlers*	*Financial Year*	*Settlers*
1975-76	539	1986-87	6628
1976-77	951	1987-88	5981
1977-78	5400	1988-89	7961
1978-79	10828	1989-90	11156
1979-80	12915	1990-91	13248
1980-81	12171	1991-92	9592
1981-82	11088	1992-93	5651
1982-83	8690	1993-94	5434
1983-84	9510	1994-95	5097
1984-85	8487	1995-96	3567
1985-86	7168		

Source: BIPR, Community Profiles, 1994 (1991 Census); DIMA, Immigration Update, June Quarter 1996. Cited in Thomas, M. (1997b), **"The Vietnamese in Australia"**, p. 276.

Table A1.2: Age Distribution of Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Age Range (years)	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
0-4	411	362	773
5-9	953	923	1876
10-14	3150	2868	6018
15-19	7074	6592	13666
20-24	9332	10163	19495
25-29	9499	10090	19589
30-34	10431	9450	19881
35-39	11268	10351	21619
40-44	8431	8843	17274
45-49	4989	5121	10110
50-54	2869	2646	5515
55-59	1988	2217	4205
60-64	1590	2054	3644
65-69	1592	1805	3397
70-74	878	1147	2025
75 and over	792	1174	1966
Total	***75247***	***75806***	***151053***

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E01 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.3: First and Second Generation Vietnamese-Australians, 1996

	Overseas born (a)	*Second generation Australians (b)*	*Total*
Country	***'000***	***'000***	***'000***
United Kingdom & Ireland	1124.0	1522.9	2647.0
Italy	238.2	333.9	572.1
New Zealand	291.4	200.0	491.4
Former Yugoslav Republic	175.4	131.3	306.7
Greece	126.5	153.9	280.5
Germany	110.3	139.3	249.6
Netherlands	87.9	142.5	230.4
Vietnam	151.1	46.8	197.8
China	111.0	40.2	151.2
Total population	3901.9	3595.3	7497.2

(a) The population identified in this table is based on Census counts, and not the Estimated Resident Population; it therefore has some variance with the figures in table 17.

(b) 'Second generation' here refers to people who were born in Australia, with one or both parents born in Vietnam. In the body of this dissertation, 'second generation' is used to identify those who have had most, if not all, of their education in Australia.

Source: ABS, unpublished Census data, 1996 – cited in Year Book Australia 1998, ABS Catalogue No. 1301.0, p. 162.

Table A1.4: Main Countries of Birth of the Australian Population

	1947(a)	*1954(a)*	*1961(a)*	*1971(a)*	*1981(b)*	*1991(b)*	*1996(b)*
Country	***'000***	***'000***	***'000***	***'000***	***'000***	***'000***	***'000***
United Kingdom & Ireland	541.3	664.2	755.4	1088.3	1175.7	1244.3	1207.6
New Zealand	43.6	43.4	47.0	80.5	175.7	286.4	297.5
Italy	33.6	119.9	228.3	289.5	285.3	272.0	258.8
Former Yugoslav Republic	5.9	22.9	49.8	129.8	156.1	168.0	186.1
Vietnam	n.a	n.a	n.a	0.7	43.4	124.8	149.9
Greece	12.3	25.9	77.3	160.2	153.2	147.4	144.6
Germany	14.6	65.4	109.3	110.8	115.2	120.4	118.9
China	6.4	10.3	14.5	17.6	26.8	84.6	103.4
Hong Kong	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	16.3	(c)62.4	(c)98.0
Netherlands	2.2	52.0	102.1	99.3	100.5	100.9	97.3
Philippines	0.1	0.2	0.4	2.6	15.8	79.1	94.7
Total overseas	744.2	1286.5	1778.8	2579.3	3111.0	3965.2	4209.0
Australia	6835.2	7700.1	8729.4	10176.3	11812.3	13318.8	14080.2
Total population	**7579.4**	**8986.5**	**10508.2**	**12755.6**	**14923.3**	**17284.0**	**18289.1**

(a) Census counts, (b) Estimated resident population, (c) Includes Macao.

(b)

Source: Australia in Profile (2821.0); Estimated Resident Population by Country of Birth, Age and Sex, Australia (3221.0); Migration, Australia (3412.0) – table cited in Australian Year Book 1998, ABS Catalogue No. 1301.0, p. 161.

Table A1.5: Conditions of citizenship: Australia and selected countries

	Federal Republic of Germany	*France*	*Indonesia*	*Australia*
Citizenship by attribution	Generally follows the principle of ius sanguinis (a) Children born in Germany automatically acquire the citizenship status of their mother Children of German citizens are automatically German citizens	The bases are ius sanguinis combined with a recently severely modified ius soli (b) component (see below) Child obtains citizenship at birth if at least one parent is a French citizen If citizen by birth and they and their parents do not live in France, after 50 years French citizenship is forfeited	Generally follows the principle of ius sanguinis Child obtains citizenship at birth if at least one parent is an Indonesian citizen	Incorporates both the principle of ius sanguinis and ius soli Child eligible for Australian citizenship at birth if at least one parent is an Australian citizen Any child born in Australia (or one of its territories) is automatically an Australian citizen at birth (unless neither parent is an Australian citizen or permanent resident)
Attitude to naturalisation	A discretionary grant An exception and not a matter of course	Matter of course, but applicant must meet specified requirements	A discretionary act of the Government Not a right upon fulfilling all legal requirements	Officially a discretionary act, but in practice a matter of course if applicant is able to meet specified requirements (see below)
Criteria for naturalisation	1. Persons defined as 'ethnic Germans' (irrespective of country of birth) have a legal right to German citizenship 2. For all other aliens, may be granted if applicant is at least 18 years of age and: • has at least 10 years residence • has adequate living accommodation • is not dependent on public assistance • has a good reputation • can write and speak German adequately • has basic knowledge of German political and social structures • is committed to the democratic order of Germany • accepts the basic cultural structure of Germany • renounces his or her previous nationality	1. Since 1993 children born in France to foreign nationals may gain French citizenship at age 18, but must first demonstrate a 'positive intention' to become French (e.g. by registering for work or military service in France) 2. May be granted if applicant is at least 18 years of age and: • has been resident in France for 5 years continuously • has a good knowledge of the French national language • is of upright character • shows a good knowledge of French and acts French by embracing the culture • shows that France is at 'the centre' of his/her economic and family life	May be granted if applicant is as least 21 years of age and: • has been resident for the 5 years preceding application or for an aggregate of 10 years • has a 'reasonable command' of the Indonesian language and 'some knowledge' of Indonesian history • has not been convicted of a crime • is in good physical and mental health • has a regular source of income • renounces any previous citizenship	May be granted if applicant is at least 18 years of age and: • has a total 2 years (of the previous 5) permanent residence in Australia, which must include 12 months residence in the 2 years immediately before application • is capable of understanding the nature of the citizenship application • has a basic knowledge of the English language • understands the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship • is of good character • is likely to live permanently in Australia or to maintain a close and continuing association with Australia
Dual citizenship	Officially prohibited	Legally permitted	Not allowed, but some exceptions (acquired through marriage)	Not allowed of Australian citizens by birth, but accepted if it is clear that an individual has not actively sought to acquire the other nationality

(a) *ius sanguinis*: 'law of the blood', one of the two internationally recognised legal principles used to determine an individual's country of citizenship at birth. Generally, where a country determines nationality and citizenship through the principle of *ius sanguinis*, if one or both parents are citizens their offspring are automatically attributed with this citizenship at birth.

(b) *ius soli* 'law of the soil': a person is attributed with citizenship of the country in which he or she is born. *Source:* Goldlust 1996: 39.

Table A1.6: Registered Marital Status for Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

	Married	*Separated*	*Divorced*	*Widowed*	*Never Married*	*Total*
Male						
15-19 years	61	13	14	10	6976	7074
20-24 years	858	106	49	12	8307	9332
25-29 years	3498	287	202	18	5494	9499
30-34 years	6525	388	418	23	3077	10431
35-39 years	8509	457	542	38	1722	11268
40-44 years	6833	384	402	44	768	8431
45-49 years	4202	228	238	44	277	4989
50-54 years	2447	123	144	42	113	2869
55-59 years	1687	91	88	45	77	1988
60-64 years	1368	64	55	57	46	1590
65-69 years	1332	68	42	96	54	1592
70-74 years	720	30	13	74	41	878
75-79 years	358	16	5	65	29	473
80-84 years	139	6	0	30	12	187
85-89 years	47	0	0	16	10	73
90 and over	21	5	3	13	14	56
Total	**38605**	**2266**	**2215**	**627**	**27017**	**70730**
Female						
15-19 years	162	12	8	8	6402	6592
20-24 years	2532	285	147	28	7171	10163
25-29 years	5360	506	409	53	3762	10090
30-34 years	6369	592	516	109	1864	9450
35-39 years	7558	623	793	191	1186	10351
40-44 years	6517	492	670	255	909	8843
45-49 years	3735	269	393	278	446	5121
50-54 years	1849	144	188	257	208	2646
55-59 years	1538	91	117	368	103	2217
60-64 years	1338	72	81	502	61	2054
65-69 years	1006	59	66	617	57	1805
70-74 years	499	22	21	568	37	1147
75-79 years	195	18	3	390	39	645
80-84 years	63	0	4	248	12	327
85-89 years	13	3	0	93	8	117
90 and over	14	0	3	61	6	84
Total	**38748**	**3188**	**3419**	**4026**	**22271**	**71652**
Persons						
15-19 years	223	25	22	18	13378	13666
20-24 years	3390	391	196	40	15478	19495
25-29 years	8858	793	611	71	9256	19589
30-34 years	12894	980	934	132	4941	19881
35-39 years	16067	1080	1335	229	2908	21619
40-44 years	13350	876	1072	299	1677	17274
45-49 years	7937	497	631	322	723	10110
50-54 years	4296	267	332	299	321	5515
55-59 years	3225	182	205	413	180	4205
60-64 years	2706	136	136	559	107	3644
65-69 years	2338	127	108	713	111	3397
70-74 years	1219	52	34	642	78	2025
75-79 years	553	34	8	455	68	1118
80-84 years	202	6	4	278	24	514
85-89 years	60	3	0	109	18	190
90 and over	35	5	6	74	20	140
Total	**77353**	**5454**	**5634**	**4653**	**49288**	**142382**

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing E02 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.7: Language Spoken at Home – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

	Male	*Female*	*Persons*
Speaks English only	2038	2016	4054
Speaks other language: Arabic (including Lebanese)	89	42	131
Speaks other language: Australian Indigenous Languages	3	5	8
Speaks other language: Bosnian	3	0	3
Speaks other language: Chinese languages: Cantonese	12372	13281	25653
Speaks other language: Chinese languages: Mandarin	607	529	1136
Speaks other language: Chinese languages: Other (a)	1851	1990	3841
Speaks other language: Chinese languages: Total	*14830*	*15800*	*30630*
Speaks other language: Croatian	0	0	0
Speaks other language: French	65	58	123
Speaks other language: German	60	49	109
Speaks other language: Greek	34	19	53
Speaks other language: Hindi	5	3	8
Speaks other language: Hungarian	0	3	3
Speaks other language: Indonesian	7	5	12
Speaks other language: Italian	52	35	87
Speaks other language: Khmer	233	171	404
Speaks other language: Korean	16	26	42
Speaks other language: Macedonian	3	0	3
Speaks other language: Malay	3	3	6
Speaks other language: Maltese	0	3	3
Speaks other language: Netherlandic	6	4	10
Speaks other language: Persian	3	3	6
Speaks other language: Polish	0	0	0
Speaks other language: Portuguese	0	3	3
Speaks other language: Russian	4	5	9
Speaks other language: Serbian	4	0	4
Speaks other language: Sinhalese	3	3	6
Speaks other language: Spanish	7	6	13
Speaks other language: Tagalog (Filipino)	17	29	46
Speaks other language: Tamil	3	6	9
Speaks other language: Thai	17	4	21
Speaks other language: Turkish	0	0	0
Speaks other language: Ukrainian	0	0	0
Speaks other language: Vietnamese	55794	55863	111657
Speaks other language: Other (b)	293	290	583
Not stated	1248	989	2237
Total	**74840**	**75443**	**150283**

(a) Comprises 'Chinese n.f.d.', 'Hakka', 'Teochew', 'Wu' and 'Chinese languages n.e.c.' – nfd = not further defined,

(b) Includes 'inadequately described' and 'non-verbal so described'.

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E08 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.8: Proficiency in English Language – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996.

Age	*Very well/well*		*Not well/not at all*		*Not stated (a)*		*Total*		
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
5-9 years	576	540	324	312	33	51	933	903	1836
10-14	2537	2303	457	412	80	91	3074	2806	5880
15-19	6057	5733	630	560	149	108	6836	6401	13237
20-24	7156	6812	1407	2633	269	188	8832	9633	18465
25-29	6271	5238	2658	4317	227	217	9156	9772	18928
30-34	6083	4147	3861	4953	247	166	10191	9266	19457
35-39	6022	3859	4831	6134	210	170	11063	10163	21226
40-44	4206	3114	3944	5425	138	137	8288	8676	16964
45-49	2389	1560	2415	3361	80	61	4884	4982	9866
50-54	1201	596	1582	1946	36	34	2819	2576	5395
55-59	718	306	1203	1827	27	30	1948	2163	4111
60-64	361	143	1180	1845	20	34	1561	2022	3583
65-69	255	92	1276	1659	40	33	1571	1784	3355
70-74	103	39	748	1061	19	27	870	1127	1997
75 & over	86	48	671	1077	15	29	772	1154	1926
Total	**44021**	**34530**	**27187**	**37522**	**1590**	**1376**	**72798**	**73428**	**146226**

(a) Comprises persons who stated a language but did not state proficiency and persons who did not state language or proficiency.

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E09 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.9: Weekly Individual Income – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Weekly Income	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Negative income	390	424	814
Nil income	3821	6750	10571
$1 - $39	653	1878	2531
$40 - $79	2880	3974	6854
$80 - $119	3696	4572	8268
$120 - $159	15606	17042	32648
$160 - $199	4707	7848	12555
$200 - $299	4607	6400	11007
$300 - $399	8948	8243	17191
$400 - $499	8487	5142	13629
$500 - $599	5238	2769	8007
$600 - $699	2924	1429	4353
$700 - $799	2119	780	2899
$800 - $999	1927	643	2570
$1000 - $1499	1248	354	1602
$1500 or more	429	146	575
Not stated	3053	3259	6312
Total	**70733**	**71653**	**142386**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, E12 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.10: Age When Left School – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Age	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
14 years and under	5906	8126	14032
15 years	3535	4134	7669
16 years	4622	4939	9561
17 years	7492	7074	14566
18 years	16116	15196	31312
19 years and over	18099	15298	33397
Still at school	5066	5104	10170
Never attended school	4064	6052	10116
Not stated	5833	5730	11563
Total	*70733*	*71653*	*142386*

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E11 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.11: Level of Educational Attainment (post-school) – Vietnam-born Australian residents,

Level Attained	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Higher degree	772	248	1020
Postgraduate diploma	332	322	654
Bachelor degree	5946	4375	10321
Undergraduate diploma	730	877	1607
Associate diploma	1786	1920	3706
Skilled vocational qualification	2289	857	3146
Basic vocational qualification	716	984	1700
Level of attainment inadequately described	300	433	733
Level of attainment not stated	6318	6349	12667
Total	**19189**	**16365**	**35554**

Note: Excludes persons with a qualification that is outside the scope of the ABSCQ.

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E15 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.12: Highest Field of Qualification Attained – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Field	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Business and Administration	1547	3218	4765
Health	943	1257	2200
Education	785	1328	2113
Society and Culture	1454	1580	3034
Natural and Physical Sciences	2780	2176	4956
Engineering	5070	661	5731
Architecture and Building	394	59	453
Agriculture and related fields	148	52	200
Miscellaneous fields	459	574	1033
Field of study inadequately described	241	138	379
Field of study not stated	5368	5322	10690
Total	**19189**	**16365**	**35554**

Note: Excludes persons with a qualification that is outside the scope of the ABSCQ.

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E16Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.13: Labour Force Status – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Age	*EFT (a)*	*EPT (b)*	*ENS (c)*	*Emp (d)*	*Une (e)*	*TLF (f)*	*NLF (g)*	*NST (h)*	*Total*
Male									
15-19	265	442	65	772	550	1322	5658	94	7074
20-24	2533	998	193	3724	1673	5397	3713	222	9332
25-34	10686	1666	491	12843	3272	16115	3316	499	19930
35-44	10921	1938	427	13286	2860	16146	3121	432	19699
45-54	3908	758	155	4821	1253	6074	1680	104	7858
55-64	770	188	42	1000	783	1783	1731	64	3578
65-74	72	41	10	123	111	234	2236	0	2470
75+	13	18	5	36	17	53	739	0	792
Total	**29168**	**6049**	**1388**	**36605**	**10519**	**47124**	**22194**	**1415**	**70733**
Female									
15-19	134	561	50	745	463	1208	5329	55	6592
20-24	2312	1195	151	3658	1796	5454	4543	166	10163
25-34	6408	1740	257	8405	3168	11573	7459	508	19540
35-44	6147	1968	310	8425	2689	11114	7656	424	19194
45-54	2111	718	127	2956	1400	4356	3279	132	7767
55-64	230	93	20	343	577	920	3319	32	4271
65-74	33	22	9	64	50	114	2838	0	2952
75+	18	9	0	27	16	43	1129	0	1172
Total	**17393**	**6306**	**924**	**24623**	**10159**	**34782**	**35552**	**1317**	**71651**
Persons									
15-19	399	1003	115	1517	1013	2530	10987	149	13666
20-24	4845	2193	344	7382	3469	10851	8256	388	19495
25-34	17094	3406	748	21248	6440	27688	10775	1007	39470
35-44	17068	3906	737	21711	5549	27260	10777	856	38893
45-54	6019	1476	282	7777	2653	10430	4959	236	15625
55-64	1000	281	62	1343	1360	2703	5050	96	7849
65-74	105	63	19	187	161	348	5074	0	5422
75+	31	27	5	63	33	96	1868	0	1964
Total	**46561**	**12355**	**2312**	**61228**	**20678**	**81906**	**57746**	**2732**	**142384**

(a) EFT: Employed, Full-time (worked over 35 hours in all jobs in the week prior to census night).
(b) EPT: Employed, Part-time.
(c) ENS: Employed, Not stated (stated their labour force status, but not their hours worked).
(d) Emp: Total Employed.
(e) Une: Unemployed.
(f) TLF: Total labour force.
(g) NLF: Not in the labour force.
(h) NST: Not stated (persons who did not state their labour force status).

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E17 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.14: Occupation – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Occupation	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Managers and Administrators	1626	783	2409
Professionals	4104	2847	6951
Technicians and Associate Professionals	3016	1628	4644
Tradespersons and Related Workers	6165	1804	7969
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	152	673	825
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	1797	3756	5553
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	8635	4800	13435
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	2600	3054	5654
Labourers and Related Workers	6597	4093	10690
Inadequately described	553	255	808
Not stated	1359	931	2290
Total	*36604*	*24624*	*61228*

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E18 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.15: Industry of Employment – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Industry	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	689	298	987
Mining	53	11	64
Manufacturing	15600	9227	24827
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	85	43	128
Construction	798	123	921
Wholesale Trade	2054	911	2965
Retail Trade	4030	3373	7403
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	1990	1091	3081
Transport and Storage	876	358	1234
Communication Services	1583	925	2508
Finance and Insurance	635	1067	1702
Property and Business Services	2055	1451	3506
Government, Administration and Defence	781	691	1472
Education	675	698	1373
Health and Community Services	913	1794	2707
Cultural and Recreational Services	338	199	537
Personal and Other Services	782	764	1546
Non-classifiable economic units	1181	587	1768
Not stated	1490	1011	2501
Total	**36608**	**24622**	**61230**

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E19 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Table A1.16: Religion – Vietnam-born Australian residents, 1996

Religion	*Male*	*Female*	*Persons*
Christian: Anglican	275	315	590
Christian: Baptist	1994	1995	3989
Christian: Brethren	3	3	6
Christian: Catholic	16811	17174	33985
Christian: Churches of Christ	37	35	72
Christian: Jehovah's Witnesses	98	109	207
Christian: Latter Day Saints	29	44	73
Christian: Lutheran	75	51	126
Christian: Oriental Christian	0	3	3
Christian: Orthodox: Greek	120	50	170
Christian: Orthodox: Macedonian	0	0	0
Christian: Orthodox: Other	7	5	12
Christian: Orthodox: Total	*127*	*55*	*182*
Christian: Pentecostal: Assemblies of God	8	17	25
Christian: Pentecostal: Other	22	26	48
Christian: Pentecostal: Total	*30*	*43*	*73*
Christian: Presbyterian and Reformed	66	84	150
Christian: Salvation Army	6	12	18
Christian: Seventh-day Adventist	27	36	63
Christian: Uniting Church	260	311	571
Christian: Other Protestant	307	333	640
Christian: Other Christian	13	7	20
Christian: Christian, n.f.d	212	251	463
Christian: Total	*20370*	*20861*	*41231*
Non Christian: Buddhism	30162	31860	62022
Non Christian: Hinduism	18	11	29
Non Christian: Islam	70	88	158
Non Christian: Judaism	9	7	16
Non Christian: Other religions	804	734	1538
Non Christian: Total	*31063*	*32700*	*63763*
No religion (a)	19244	17495	36739
Inadequately described (b)	431	464	895
Not stated	4139	4289	8428
Total	**75247**	**75809**	**151056**

(a) Includes 'No religion n.f.d.', 'Agnosticism', 'Atheism', 'Humanism' and 'Rationalism'.
(b) Includes 'religious belief, nfd' (nfd = not further defined).

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing, E10 Ethnicity Thematic Profile.

Appendix 2 VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Vietnamese Community in Australia - Victorian Chapter (VCA)

The Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 1998 lists the official aims and objectives of the VCA as:

- To provide general information, practical aid, referral, counselling to assist the settlement and integration of individuals and families within the Vietnamese community
- To develop community education programs to increase the awareness and knowledge of the Vietnamese community, as well as to promote mutual understanding between the Vietnamese and the wider community
- To develop the organisation of target groups to enhance self-help capacity, skills and confidence of Vietnamese people, as well as organise social, cultural, sport and recreational activities
- To carry out community development projects, surveys of needs of target groups, recommend for changes and/or new services, to foster the principle of access and equity.

Financial details in this annual report reveal the total income received in the year ended 30 June 1998 total $187,358 leaving a surplus of $15,478.

At the VCA head office in Footscray, there is a range of publications available, a selection of which is listed below:

1. Brochures concerned with issues in the broader community. These may have been produced in conjunction with other agencies, such as the Equal Opportunity Commission, and are written in both Vietnamese and English:
    - responsible gaming
    - making a complaint
    - equal opportunity
    - neighbourhood watch

- heroin dependency and its problems (Turning the Tide program)
- drug awareness foundation (Australian Lions)
- employment assistance for people with disabilities
- cub scouts
- child care
- state trustees
- taxation self-assessment
- fire regulations
- family violence
- immigration

2. Projects developed on the initiative of the VCA:
    - anti-cancer and heart disease project
    - shellfish in Port Phillip Bay
    - *FACE IT* drug education and prevention initiative (refer to section on the Vietnamese Students Association for more information)

3. Literature from organisations similar to VCA in other countries, particularly France:
    - Con Duong Dan Chu Hoa va Phat Trien Viet Nam (Roadmap to a Democratic and Developed Vietnam)
    - Free Vietnam Alliance – History and Activities
    - Vietnam Dan Chu (Vietnamese People)

Vietnamese Students Association (VSA)

This association has developed a program to deal with the drug problem within the Vietnamese community. The *FACE IT* Drug Education and Prevention Initiative Project is being run under the auspices of the VCA, as a result of a grant of $136,000 from the Department of Justice. It is the first such major project undertaken by the Vietnamese-Australian community regarding this problem and consists of a series of educational and community events over a year aimed at drawing community responses to the issues

surrounding drug abuse. The aspects of the program, as described in the attached brochure (Appendix 4), are summarised:

1. Bilingual play performed in front of Vietnamese audiences

- "Dragon's Lair" – performed in community theatre, Saturday Vietnamese language schools, Vietnamese public festivals, cultural events and the general public – note attached advertising poster

2. SBS Vietnamese radio program:

- sixteen fortnightly radio broadcasts throughout the year designed to increase awareness and understanding of drug issues and ways of addressing them, stimulate productive discussion within the community, and increase the community's participation in the project

3. Community consultations, seminars and conferences:

- professional speakers and members of the community meeting to maintain feedback and evaluation of the project

The Program available at performances of *Dragon's Lair* emphasises the importance of this project, but also makes the point that the community itself must take on the responsibility of actively participating in developing solutions and discussing related issues. This booklet also provides information about the drug problem itself, listing many resources and contacts for people who need help.

Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association (AVWWA)

The AVWWA is a charitable and non-political organisation, affiliated to the National Council of Women of Victoria and to the Ethnic Communities Council (Victoria), and was established on 15 January 1983. Its stated aims are:

- To assist the settlement of the Vietnamese community in Australia
- To promote co-operation and mutual assistance within the Vietnamese community

- To increase Vietnamese women's understanding of their rights and responsibilities
- To provide material and emotional support
- To provide information on Vietnamese culture and life in Australia so as to promote mutual understanding and harmonious community relation

The activities of the AVWWA are outlined on the attached sheet (Appendix 4) and are listed below:

- Carrying out community development
- Providing assistance and counselling concerning employment, education, training, health, gambling, drug, youth issues, family relationships and budgeting
- Organising information meetings, tours, excursions, summer camps
- Organising classes and tutorials
- Organising conferences, seminars and exhibitions
- Organising fund-raising functions
- Publishing the bilingual magazine *Phu Nu Viet*
- Providing emergency accommodation to women and children

The Annual Report dated 20 September 1998 makes the claim that the AVWWA is the 'most significant, innovative Vietnamese organisation in the whole of Australia' (Yen Bui, president). Its income was the highest ever, $853,029, leaving a surplus of $104,545. In March 1998, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock officially opened the purpose-built head office in Richmond, an event seen by founding president Cam Nguyen as 'a landmark in the history of our organisation' (Annual Report). Cam Nguyen notes the patriarchal nature of Vietnamese society and the determination of the AVWWA in its early days to resist coming under the umbrella of the VCA. She sees this quest for independence as having paid off, noting in the annual report:

> We have become the most active Vietnamese community organisation, not only in Victoria, but also in the whole of Australia, offering the most comprehensive range of services...We believe that whatever problems exist in our community, we should not go into denial mode but squarely acknowledge them and try to do something about them ourselves.

The emphasis in the annual report is on working professionally within mainstream society to look after the needs of Vietnamese-Australians, by using vision and leadership, and by being prepared to compete for funds with other private and community providers of welfare services.

Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association (SICMAA)

The Annual Report of SICMAA lists the aims as:

- To create an environment in which Cambodians, Laotians, Vietnamese and Chinese from Indochina can work together towards achieving common goals
- To facilitate the integration of the Indochinese community into the Australian society
- To help the Indochinese people face their daily difficulties stemming from the difference of languages and cultures
- To promote the spirit of mutual assistance within the Association and in relation with other ethnic groups

This association caters for more than just the Vietnamese in Australia, but they are the largest group. SICMAA provides information and assistance in:

- Discrimination
- Employment and training
- Education
- Elderly services
- Emergency relief
- Family support
- Housing
- Health referrals
- Immigration

- Income support
- Indochinese culture and customs
- Legal referral
- Recreational activities
- Talking newspaper
- Tax help
- Unemployment
- Volunteering

The Annual Report of SICMAA is produced in four languages. According to the 1996 report, which was the most recently obtainable, the income for the year ended 30 June 1996 was $401,765, leaving a surplus of $26,367. The vitality evident on visiting SICMAA and interviewing Phong Nguyen, the co-ordinator, suggests that these figures would have increased recently.

Appendix 3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A3.1: Interview Questions

Following is a list of the questions asked in the interviews:

Personal

- Personal details, such as name, length of time in Austraha, family here, occupation.
- Have you been back to Vietnam?

Citizenship

- Why do Vietnamese become Australian citizens?
- What does citizenship mean to Vietnamese?
- Can people see a more active view of citizenship?

Barriers to Participation

- What do you feel about any tension between being an Australian citizen and yet still feeling the pull of the homeland? How important is the family?
- What do young people feel about these matters?
- How do you feel about the different attitudes of the young?
- How well were you accepted by other Australians when you first came here?
- How has your life in Australia changed over time?
- Is the opportunity there to participate in Australian community life?
- What are the barriers to the participation of Vietnamese in Australian society?
- What has been your experience of racism in Austraha?
- How do you see the rise of Pauline Hanson and the One Nation Party?
- What can Vietnamese-Australians and organisations such as the VCA do to counteract racist attitudes and One Nation?
- What do young people think about racism and Pauline Hanson?
- How difficult was it to learn English, and how important is it to the ability to participate here?

Community Associations

- Are you involved with any Vietnamese community associations? If so, in what way? If not, why not?
- Is there a tradition of community associations in Vietnam?
- What involvement does the VCA have in politics, Australian and Vietnamese?
- How effectively does the VCA represent the community?
- What is your opinion on the success of Vietnamese community associations in helping people participate more fully in Australian society?
- What does your organisation do in the community, how do people know about it, how accessible is it (asked to leaders of community associations)?

Politics

- Is the Australia-Vietnam relationship a good thing, and helpful regarding issues such as human rights in Vietnam?
- What are your thoughts regarding the Austrahan human rights delegation that went to Vietnam just a few years ago?
- Are you interested in Australian politics? If so, why; if not, why not?
- How did you become interested in politics (to people such as Sang Nguyen, Mai Ho)?
- How difficult was it to become involved in Australian politics?
- Are Vietnamese traditionally interested in politics?
- Do you see yourself as a role model within the Vietnamese community (to public figures)?
- Do you see people such as Sang and Mai as role models?
- How do you encourage other people to participate (asked to public representatives)?

Friendship Agreement

- What is your opinion on the 'friendship' agreement between the City of Maribyrnong and District 1 of HCMC?
- What do you think about the approach of Mai Ho? (Some would only answer this question 'off the record').
- What do you think about the criticism of Mai Ho? (Some interviewees were surprised that I knew about this, and that I had read about it in the Vietnamese-language media)
- Would the reaction to Mai have been different if the person responsible had been male and Australian-born?
- Would the reaction against Mai discourage other people from becoming involved in public life?

A3.2: Letter of Introduction

The following letter was provided to each interviewee a few days prior to the interview:

Mark Roberts
9 Noble Avenue
Strathmore 3041
9379 7164
0418 179 107

My name is Mark Roberts, 47 years old, married with four children, from 15 to 21 years old. I am a Pharmacist, and owned a Pharmacy in Braybrook for 17 years, until the end of 1995. In 1992, my wife and I went to Vietnam as tourists, with a group of teachers. This trip began to change my life as I saw another society operating and began to think about life in Australia. I realised how inadequate my own knowledge of the world was, so decided to learn Vietnamese language. In 1994, I was able to return to Vietnam, and this trip led to me enrolling at Victoria University to study Asian Studies, including Vietnamese language. In 1996, I went to Vietnam as part of the VUT Study Tour, with Vietnamese classes every morning for 3 weeks. My Vietnamese is slowly improving, but I have a long way to go. Having completed the Asian Studies degree last year, I am now studying Honours, which involves engaging in research and writing a thesis about that research. I am very interested in the Vietnamese community, both here and in Vietnam, and would like to work with the community in some way in the future. I see it as extremely important that Vietnamese should be able to be full members of Australian society, contributing to our culture and sharing their culture with Australians, in a mutually beneficial way.

The general themes that I would like to discuss in our interview are:

- citizenship
- multiculturahsm
- participation in Australian society
- experience of life in Australia
- changes in your life during your time in Australia
- is there a Vietnamese community?
- Vietnamese community associations – what is their role – who are members – effective?
- attitudes to Vietnamese with a prominent public profile – business, community, politics
- problems encountered by Vietnamese – racism, language, unemployment, gambling
- Australia-Vietnam relations

I would like to assure you that everything we discuss will remain completely confidential and private, so that there will be no embarrassment suffered. I also seek your permission to tape the interview.

Appendix 4 DOCUMENTS

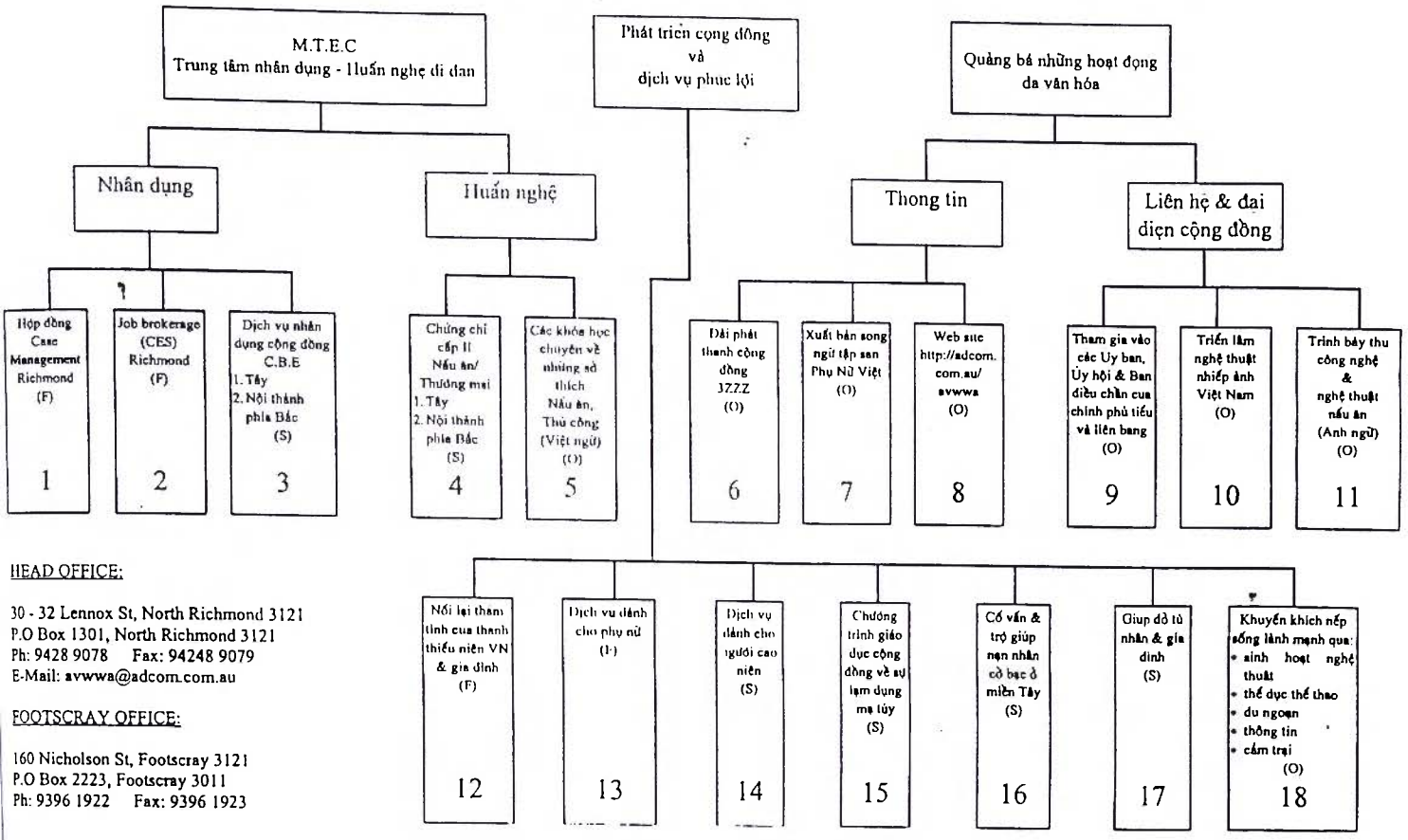
This appendix contains copies of the following material:

- AVWWA Activity Chart 1998
- Brochure and poster for the play *Dragon's Lair* and the *FACE IT* drugs project
- Copies, in English and Vietnamese, of the 'Friendship Agreement' between the City of Maribyrnong and District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION
HỘI TƯƠNG TRỢ PHỤ NỮ VIỆT ÚC

Sơ đồ hoạt động năm 1998

Sources of funding: F = Federal (Liên bang) S = State (Tiểu bang) O = Own funding (Quỹ của Hội)



HEAD OFFICE:

30 - 32 Lennox St, North Richmond 3121
P.O Box 1301, North Richmond 3121
Ph: 9428 9078 Fax: 94248 9079
E-Mail: avwwa@adcom.com.au

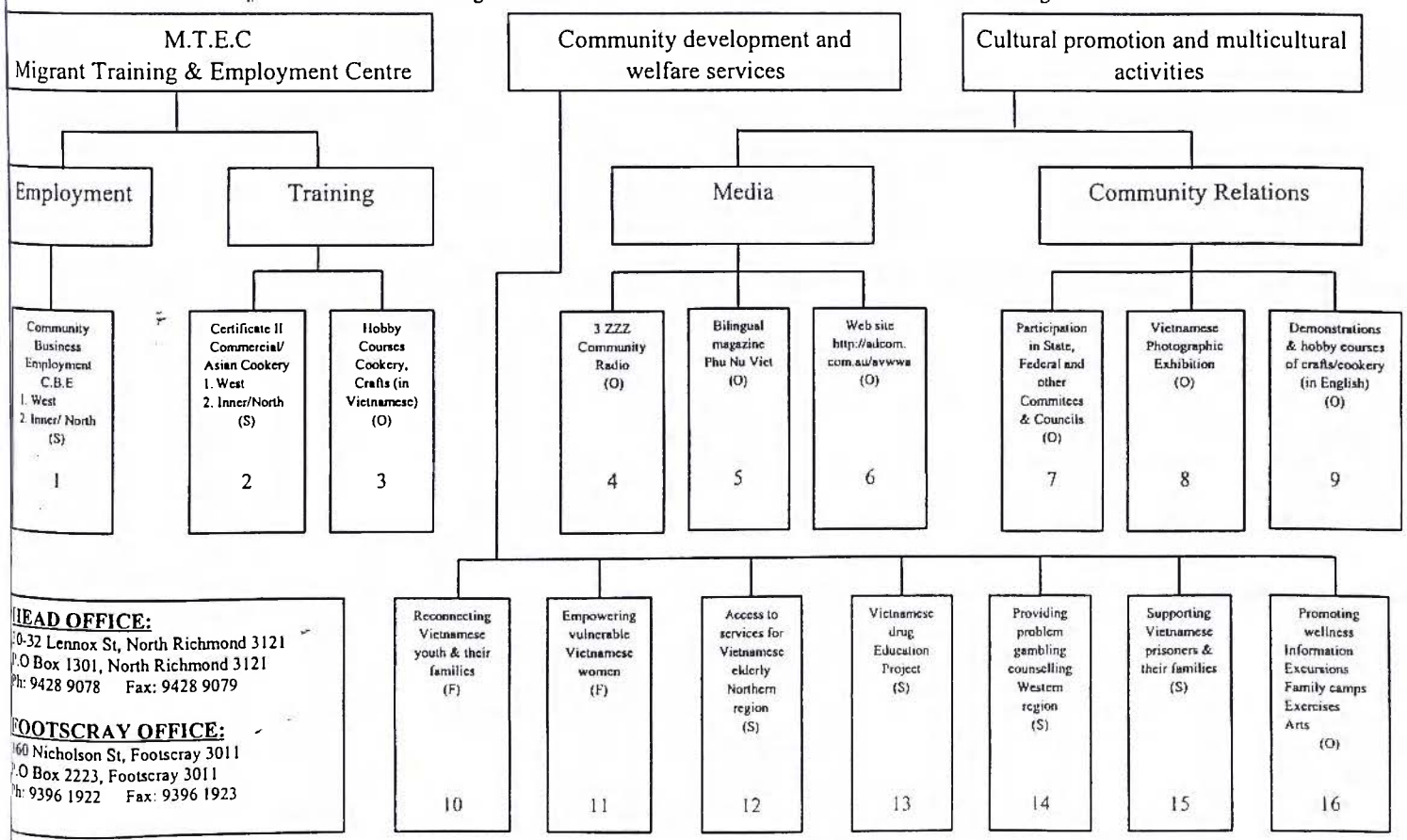
FOOTSCRAY OFFICE:

160 Nicholson St, Footscray 3121
P.O Box 2223, Footscray 3011
Ph: 9396 1922 Fax: 9396 1923

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Activity Chart 1998

Source of funding: F = Federal S = State O = Own funding



HEAD OFFICE:
30-32 Lennox St, North Richmond 3121
P.O Box 1301, North Richmond 3121
Ph: 9428 9078 Fax: 9428 9079

FOOTSCRAY OFFICE:
160 Nicholson St, Footscray 3011
P.O Box 2223, Footscray 3011
Ph: 9396 1922 Fax: 9396 1923

DRUGS

FACE IT

A Drug Education & Prevention Initiative

Vietnamese Community in Australia Victorian Chapter

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

vicsafe
Partnerships against crime

[redacted]

The project encourages all members of the community to participate in the above programs. The project welcomes any contribution, whether in organising activities or forwarding ideas to further the project objectives.

The project has the support of a number of existing organisations specialising in this area so if you have any queries about drugs (legal and illegal) we will be able to get answers for you or lead you in the right direction.

So watch out for our activities in the newspaper or radio or call us.

[redacted]

All you need to do is telephone our Project Administrator, Mr Nguyen Manh Thang:

Telephone: (03) 9362 0895

Or write to

'Face it' Project Administrator at

131B HOPKINS STREET

FOOTSCRAY 3011

Or email to cdnvvic@vietnet.com.au

Please include your contact details so we can get back to you.

- Are you worried about media portrayal of drug issues in the Vietnamese community?
- Are you concerned of the level of drug use in your area?
- Do you know where to get information about drugs?
- Did you know alcohol, tobacco and painkillers can be abused?
- Do you want to help people you know who are using drugs but don't know how?
- Do you want to voice your concern about this issue?
- Do you want to know more on this topic?

[redacted]

There is concern from within the community of the increasing level of drug use and abuse especially amongst young people. This project came about after community consultations and research which outlined a need for active involvement of the Vietnamese community in education and prevention with regards to drug use. This project will also address other concerns raised by the community.

[redacted]

The project will implement programs to educate, inform and involve the Vietnamese community in discussion about a range of issues on drugs.

The project will involve a number of relevant and specialised services and organisations that are concerned with the issue of drugs in the community.

The project relies on active community participation for it to be effective. The feed back you give us in each of the programs will be of great importance for us so that we can plan future programs or build on the existing programs. We will evaluate each of the programs to maintain this objective.

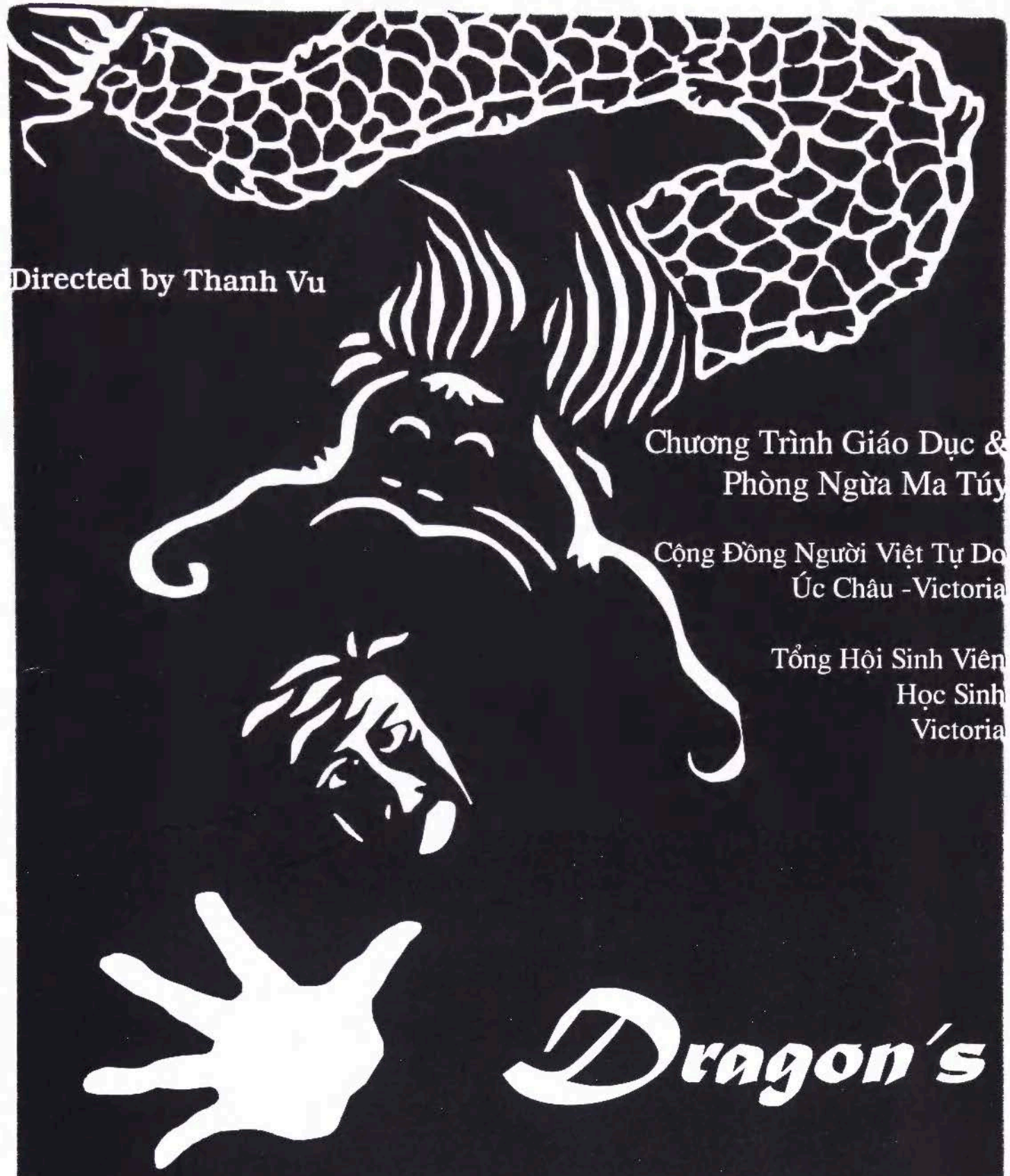
[redacted]

The project insists that it will play an informative, educational and preventative role. It will try to reach a wide spectrum of the community both young and old.
Three programs are planned:

1. Community group discussions and informative seminars on various topics on drugs and drug use and other related issues. The topics are not fixed so suggestions from the community are most welcome. These sessions will be held in Footscray, Springvale and other locations.

2. SBS Vietnamese radio discussion panel. A panel of professionals who are knowledgeable of drug issues will be presented. Panel representatives may include social workers, youth workers, police and health professionals. People will be able to call in to ask questions or voice their opinions.

3. Drama production to be held in schools. An interactive play focusing on drug issues for young people and families will be performed as an entertaining way of informing young people as well as parents.



Directed by Thanh Vu

Chương Trình Giáo Dục &
Phòng Ngừa Ma Túy

Cộng Đồng Người Việt Tự Do
Úc Châu -Victoria

Tổng Hội Sinh Viên
Học Sinh
Victoria

Dragon's

The Church
10A Hyde Street
Footscray
Mel Ref. 42-D5
Sept 24,25,26th
7.30pm
Adult $12 - Concession $8

Written by
David Nguyen & Thanh Vu

BOOKINGS
FCAC
9689 5677
0414 651 196

VICsafe
Partnerships against crime

PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE of DISTRICT I - MARIBYRNONG CITY

AGREEMENT

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Between The People's Committee of District I, Ho Chi Minh City - Vietnam and Maribyrnong City, Victoria, Australia

On this day, the 18th of March 1998 at 15 0'clock at the Office of The People's Committee of District I, Ho Chi Minh City representatives of 2 localities are composed of :

THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE OF DISTRICT I :

- Mr. NGO HOANG MINH, Chairman of the District People 's Committee as representative.
- Mrs. DANG THI NGOC THINH, Vice - Chairman of the District People's Committee.
- Mr. MAC NHU SUONG, Vice-Chairman of the District People's Committee.

And representatives of a number of organs, offices and bodies under District I.

MARIBYRNONG CITY :

- Mrs. MAI HO , Mayor as representative
- Mr. IAN GIBSON, Population Development Director
- Miss LE TAN , The eminent young Lady of Australia in 1998
- Dr. JAMES LA NAUZE, Health Center Director
- Mr. KERRY FLATTEY, Writer and Mayor Secretary
- Mr. LE SON, Representative of the Vietnamese- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

In order to extend incessantly the relationship and cooperation in many fields between our 2 localities, and at the same time in the spirit of mutual understanding, after a time of coming into contact, exchange, today the representatives of District I and Maribyrnong City have discussed and are unanimous to sign this agreement with the contents as follows :

- Each year periodically, both sides will inform each other their respective situation of socio-economic development , investment opportunities, need of cooperation in various fiels and organize mutual visits, at least 1 visit per delegation every year. By this way, the mutual understanding between our 2 governments and people of 2 localities will be increased, and at the same time, the cooperation in many fields, especially in the domain of economy, culture, education and training , sports and

physical training and health care for the people according to the principles of friendship, equity and mutual benefit will be developed.

- To encourage businesses of various economic backgrounds from both sides to promote the relationship of investment cooperation by different forms, and scales appropriate in compliance with the provisions of the law.

- Maribyrnong City will take part in a campaign for Australian enterprises in activities in Ho Chi Minh City to actively participe to the contribution for setting up charity funds, ability development funds.... of District I, And at the same time, to help the Saigon Language Center to improve the program, to extend and to more up-grade the quality in teaching English, in which, to help in the training for at least 1 class for key cadres of District I.

- On the basis of its capacity, Maribyrnong City can help with the District I investment in additional material bases and equipments for teaching and job-training to the bloc of schools in order to more up-grade the quality in education and training And at the same time, to support in medical equipments and to foster for more up-grading the professional capacity to the contingent of physicians and doctors of the Health Center of District I.

Both localities will inform each other experience in the government consolidation and edification so that both sides can consult and apply in appropriate conditions and characteristics of each locality.

Above are some contents that are agreed in principle, both localities are unanimous and consider them preliminary basis for the process of cooperation relationship. Representatives of both sides would hope that the cooperation relationship in various fields between District I and Maribyrnong City will be maintained and incessantly consolidated.

This agreement is made into 4 copies (2 copies in Vietnamese, 2 copies in English) equally authentic and each side keeps 2 copies (one in Vietnamese, one in English) for the basis of implementation.

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
MARIBYRNONG CITY

Mrs. MAI HO

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE OF DISTRICT I

Mr. [illegible] HOANG MINH

UBND QUẬN 1 - T/PHỐ MARIBYRNONG

THỎA THUẬN

Giữa UBND Quận 1 TP. Hồ Chí Minh - Việt Nam
và Thành phố Maribyrnong thuộc Bang Victoria - Australia .

//

Hôm nay ngày 18 tháng 3 năm 1998 vào lúc 15 h 00 tại trụ sở UBND Quận 1 Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, có đại diện của hai địa phương gồm :

Ủy ban Nhân dân Quận I :

- Ông Ngô Hoàng Minh , Chủ tịch UBND Quận làm đại diện
- Bà Đặng thị Ngọc Thịnh , Phó Chủ tịch UBND Quận
- Ông Mạc Như Sương , Phó Chủ tịch UBND Quận

và đại diện một số cơ quan, ban ngành thuộc Quận I .

Thành phố Maribyrnong :

- Bà Mai Hồ , Thị trưởng - Làm đại diện
- Ông Ian Gibson , Giám đốc Phát triển Dân số
- Cô Lê Tần , Người Thanh niên trẻ xuất sắc nước Úc 1998
- Bác sĩ James La Nauze . Giám đốc Trung tâm Y tế
- Ông Kerry Flattey . Nhà văn và là Thư ký cho Thị trưởng
- Ông Lê Sơn , đại diện Phòng Thương mại và kỹ nghệ Việt - Úc

Nhằm không ngừng mở rộng mối quan hệ và hợp tác nhiều mặt giữa 2 địa phương , đồng thời trên tinh thần hiểu biết lẫn nhau , sau một thời gian tiếp xúc , trao đổi, hôm nay đại diện của Quận 1 và Thành phố Maribyrnong đã bàn bạc và thống nhất ký văn bản thỏa thuận với một số nội dung sau đây :

- Định kỳ hàng năm, hai bên thông tin cho nhau biết về tình hình phát triển kinh tế - xã hội , cơ hội đầu tư , nhu cầu hợp tác trên các lĩnh vực và tổ chức qua lại thăm viếng lẫn nhau, ít nhất mỗi năm 1 đoàn /1 lần . Qua đó tăng thêm sự hiểu biết lẫn nhau giữa chính quyền và nhân dân 2 địa phương , đồng thời phát triển sự hợp tác về nhiều mặt nhất là lĩnh vực kinh tế , văn hóa, giáo dục- đào tạo , thể dục thể thao và chăm sóc sức khỏe cho nhân dân theo nguyên tắc hữu nghị, bình đẳng và cùng có lợi .

- Khuyến khích các doanh nghiệp thuộc các thành phần kinh tế của 2 bên đẩy mạnh quan hệ hợp tác đầu tư bằng nhiều hình thức và quy mô thích hợp theo quy định của pháp luật .

- Thành phố Maribyrnong vận động các doanh nghiệp của Australia đang hoạt động tại Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh tích cực tham gia đóng góp xây dựng các quỹ từ thiện, quỹ phát triển tài năng .v.v... của Quận 1 . Đồng thời giúp Trung tâm sinh ngữ Sàigòn cải tiến chương trình , mở rộng và nâng cao hơn nữa chất lượng giảng dạy tiếng Anh, trong đó giúp đào tạo ít nhất 1 lớp cho cán bộ chủ chốt của Quận 1.

- Trên cơ sở khả năng của mình , Thành phố Maribyrnong có thể giúp Quận 1 đầu tư thêm cơ sở vật chất và thiết bị dạy học và đào tạo nghề cho khối các trường học để góp phần nâng cao hơn nữa chất lượng giáo dục và đào tạo. Đồng thời hỗ trợ một số thiết bị y tế và bồi dưỡng nâng cao hơn nữa khả năng chuyên môn cho đội ngũ thầy thuốc thuộc Trung tâm Y tế Quận 1.

Hai địa phương sẽ thông tin cho nhau những kinh nghiệm trong việc củng cố và xây dựng chính quyền , để các bên tham khảo vận dụng sao cho phù hợp với điều kiện và đặc thù của từng địa phương .

Trên đây là một số nội dung thỏa thuận mang tính nguyên tắc , hai địa phương cùng thống nhất và coi đây là cơ sở tiền đề cho quá trình quan hệ hợp tác . Đại diện 2 bên đều mong rằng mối quan hệ hợp tác trên các lĩnh vực giữa Quận 1 và Thành phố Maribyrnong sẽ được duy trì và không ngừng được củng cố .

Văn bản thỏa thuận này được lập thành 4 bản (2 bản tiếng Việt , 2 bản tiếng Anh) có giá trị như nhau và mỗi bên giữ 2 bản (1 bản tiếng Việt, 1 bản tiếng Anh) để làm căn cứ thực hiện .

ĐẠI DIỆN THÀNH PHỐ MARIBYRNONG	ĐẠI DIỆN UBND QUẬN 1
	CHỦ TỊCH
BÀ MAI HỒ	ÔNG NGÔ HOÀNG MINH

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