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Place-making and the Finsbury/Pennington Migrant Hostel: Capturing 45 Years of Refugee and Migrant Heritage

Karen Agutter, Rachel A. Ankeny, and Linda Lacey

Introduction

The Finsbury/Pennington Migrant Hostel opened in 1949. It was the largest and longest operating migrant accommodation center in the Australian state of South Australia, which for over forty years provided temporary accommodation for newly arrived refugees and government-assisted migrants.[1] Located twelve kilometers northeast of the central business district of Adelaide, the 37-acre site was deliberately chosen because of its proximity to transport and surrounding industries in need of migrant labor. The hostel was part of a much larger, national accommodation scheme introduced by the Australian Government in 1947 to house refugees and migrants encouraged and accepted under a mass migration scheme which sought to rapidly increase the nation's population and satisfy much needed labor requirements post-World War Two.[2]

At its peak in the 1950s, the hostel housed up to 2,000 new arrivals at any one time, with residents staying for weeks, months, and in some cases years, before moving to self-found private accommodation. Initially, refugees and migrants at Finsbury/Pennington were accommodated in very basic conditions in ex-army Nissen and Quonset huts with communal dining and shared bathroom and laundry facilities. However, in spite of the later mass intake of refugees from South East Asia, the 1970s and 80s saw an overall decline in the number of new arrivals resulting in sections of the hostel closing. As government policies and general attitudes changed, the housing at the center also evolved, with communal huts giving way to self-contained units and houses. The accommodation of refugees and migrants at Finsbury/Pennington ceased in the early 1990s and the site was subdivided for public housing. Consequently, unlike other migrant accommodation centers including Bonegilla and Benalla in regional Victoria which have been the focus of considerable scholarly literature,[3] no tangible structures remain to mark this important site in the migrant diaspora after the hostel's closure.

In the wider national context, Finsbury/Pennington is particularly of interest as it is one of only a handful of centers whose functioning over a long period of time (1949–90) parallels important stages of evolution in Australian immigration policy and history in the post-war decades. The lived experiences of the residents of this hostel are thus emblematic of Australia's transition from a policy of white Australian assimilationism to the multiculturalism of the 1970s and beyond. The refugees and migrants who resided at

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[1] The hostel was known as the Finsbury Migrant Hostel until 1966 when the name was changed to the Pennington Migrant Hostel as a consequence of changing postal boundaries; hence this paper will refer to the hostel as Finsbury/Pennington.

[2] At the end of World War Two, Australia's population of just over 7 million was deemed inadequate for future national security and economic growth and, as part of the solution to this problem, the country undertook a campaign of planned mass immigration which aimed to increase the population by one per cent per year. Between 1947 and 1985, 4.3 million refugees and migrants arrived in Australia. For more on this scheme see for example Richards: 2008, Price: 1986.

[3] See for example Dellios 2012, 2015a-b.

Finsbury/Pennington during its long-standing operation also personify the changing ethnicities of migrant and refugee arrivals to Australia including assisted migrants from Britain, Europe and North America; European refugees (from the displaced persons of World War Two and later conflicts and uprisings); and, from the 1970s onward, an increasingly diverse mix of nationalities from Southeast Asia, South America, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Additionally, the evolving style of accommodation, from the government provision of very basic, large-scale communal living, to the establishment of self-contained houses and units at Finsbury/Pennington symbolizes the changing attitudes of the Australian Government towards the reception of migrants in the post-war decades, as well as the growing strength of those migrants who fought for better facilities.

Thus as well as representing an important place in the history of South Australian and Australian immigration which is emblematic of the changing application of policy across the decades after World War Two, Finsbury/Pennington also represents a place of significance in the lives of many of the migrants who passed through it. This significance was echoed in the calls from diasporic communities who expressed their desires for a physical place of memory and reflection, a place that would enable families and subsequent generations to gather and to understand the experiences of parents and grandparents. To fulfil this need, the Pennington Gardens Reserve was established in1993 on a 0.68 hectare piece of land which had previously been part of the larger hostel site.

This paper draws on a collaboration which occurred through Australian Research Council funded Linkage project "Hostel Stories: Toward a Richer Narrative of the Lived Experiences of Migrants". The project team (including this paper's authors) is comprised of staff and students at the University of Adelaide, in conjunction with community and government partners including the City of Charles Sturt where Finsbury/Pennington was located.[4] We use the establishment of the Pennington Gardens Reserve as a case study through which to explore some of the critical factors that arise when planning and building heritage sites in relation to key locations associated with migrant history. We consider how a public space was constructed to serve both the current local and previous diasporic community's needs using explicit place-making approaches. We outline how place-making principles were used to construct a functional, inclusive, and culturally-aware space which captures and communicates the diasporic history of the place through physical structures which honor the migrants' connections to the space. While place-making can provide a framework for the creation of meaningful public spaces, this approach is not without its difficulties especially when, as in this instance, the diasporic lives being captured are both diverse and fit within a long and changing political climate. This paper thus considers the problems encountered in the creation of the Pennington Gardens Reserve, and potential implications for other place-making initiatives associated with migrant and multicultural heritage sites.

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[4] Hostel Stories has received over 600 registrations of interest and conducted over 90 oral interviews with former migrants, as well as sourcing voluminous archival material on the hostel system across Australia; we are grateful to our participants for their ongoing support.

Place and Place-Making

Much has been written about the importance of place, and the stories associated with places, particularly in bringing meaning to people's lives and their role in the construction of identity.[5] But what do we mean by place, how do we define it, and how do we belong to a place, especially when the meaning of any one place is both highly individual and grossly public? In short, '[p]lace-making is based on the difference between the idea of space and the idea of place in that a space is a physical entity and place is a conception influenced by different stakeholders–spaces become places' (Franz, Güles, & Prey 2008: 321) However, as Müge Akkar Ercan (2017: 524) argues, places are 'individual and idiosyncratic, subjective and distorted…modified…built and rebuilt in a space-time continuum on the basis of emotive forces'.

The concept of place is particularly challenging when we consider the range of values that migrants associate with specific places, and, as is the case with Finsbury/Pennington, when a place is associated with consecutive waves of different migrant groups who have arrived under different socioeconomic and other conditions as well as different political agendas and policies. Helen Armstrong (2004: 240) highlights these ongoing challenges within migrant populations asking: 'how do we begin to understand what sense of place means to the many migrant groups who have lived in Australia since the 1940s? How long is a migrant's conceptual journey about place?'

Given these difficulties, Melanie Lombard's view of place-making (2014: 14) holds promise, since as she notes it

> permits a wide view of the influences and processes brought to bear on a place, and its construction in a physical but also social sense…[it] captures the incremental nature of place, in that it includes the activities of the many ordinary citizens who pass through, live in, use, build, visit or avoid a place, and are thus involved, directly or indirectly, in its physical and social construction.

A term first coined in the United States in the 1960s and 70s, place-making is a multi-faceted approach which has been used to manage and improve public places in urban environments with the aim of enlivening these spaces and enhancing the quality of life of communities. Place-making has become 'a significant, institutionalized industry engaging professionals from a wide range of disciplines—architects, physical and urban planners, landscape architects, sociologists, economists, artists, and others' (Sofield, Guia, & Specht 2017: 3).

Although originally a top-down movement, place-making has evolved to be more inclusive, and shaped by collective memory and local community involvement (Parkinson, Scott, & Redmond 2017: 503–4). Ideally, place-making should incorporate everything that has influenced a place over time and as such offers a means of exploring the complex and intricate relationships which have occurred across all levels of government and society (Lombard 2014: 14–15). Therefore, as Byrne and Goodall (2013: 65) argue, place-making can be especially significant in the context of migration. Place-making offers the potential to

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[5] See for example Friedmann: 2007.

provide a means for migrants to express both individual and collective identities within a host population (Pemberton & Phillimore 2018: 725), which is a particularly important consideration where multiple ethnicities, identities, and histories have occupied a single site as was the case in the Australian migrant accommodation centers, including Finsbury/Pennington.

Migrant Accommodation Places and Memorials

At the height of the Australian mass migration program in the 1950s, there were more than one hundred migrant accommodation centers which formed a cohesive and interdependent network across Australia (as well as an unknown number of government- and industry-funded migrant work camps). These centers (often generically called "hostels") were established primarily to provide temporary housing for newly arrived refugees and assisted migrants at a time when housing was in very short supply (see Macintyre 2015). The earliest centers were the Reception and Training Centres (such as Bonegilla) which, as the name suggests, provided not only basic initial accommodation but also training in the English language and even assimilation to the Australian way of life. From these centres, breadwinners were placed in work, often being sent to remote work camps and workers' hostels, while their dependant women and children were sent to Holding Centres (Benalla in Victoria and Wacol in Queensland, for example). Alongside these centers, a third tier, the migrant hostel, was developed to house family groups and also in some cases workers (Glenelg in South Australia, for example).

However, during the 1960s, as the number of migrants arriving in Australia decreased, many centers closed and the system of accommodation was generally centralized around large centers in or near capital cities, such as Finsbury/Pennington. By the 1980s, there was little remaining evidence of many of the earlier structures, as most had been dismantled or returned to their original purposes as military camps (such as Woodside in South Australia) or woolsheds (such as Rosewater in South Australia). However, there was growing interest from post-war migrants and refugees in particular for recognition of the sites through which they had passed. An increasing number of migrant centre reunions resulted in the collection of oral histories, increasing interest in archival research and resultant publications, and the erection of commemorative plaques as past residents strove to understand, capture, and explain their lived experiences particularly to family members in subsequent generations and to leave a legacy for the future.[6] At centers such as Bonegilla where tangible heritage structures remained, the fight began to preserve remaining structures and establish lasting memorials, which often resulted in conflicting narratives.[7] Unfortunately in South Australia, virtually nothing remained of the twelve government-funded centers which had housed tens of

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[6] For example, a fifty-year reunion resulted in the erection of a large illustrated panel on the site of the Bathurst Camp in New South Wales. Similarly, reunions initiated the collection of histories at centres such as the West Sale Holding Centre (Synan 2002).

[7] We draw the reader's attention to the well-documented discussions of the Bonegilla Centre as an example of the contested and contrasting narratives and agendas of the various stakeholders. See for example Wills 2009, Persian 2012, Pennay 2012, and Dellios 2015b; more generally in regard to retrospective commemoration see Ashton & Hamilton: 2008.

thousands of new arrivals in that state;[8] however, as in other places, migrant reunions highlighted the demand for recognition and places of commemoration and reflection.

The question then arises how, in the case of Finsbury/Pennington, can a single place represent the multiple and diverse experiences of migration and the layered interpretations of the lived experience of residents of numerous ethnicities who passed through this hostel for varying lengths of time, across a period of forty years during which there were revolutionary changes in the landscape of Australian immigration history?[9] Furthermore, how can this site capture a hostel which itself represented the migrants' marginal and liminal status, as well as the sense of camaraderie and establishment of lifelong migrant friendships and networks which in fact facilitated the migrants' transitions into the wider Australian society? And how can a site capture lived experiences which occurred in a physical environment that was constructed and controlled by the state?

Place-Making in the Creation of the Reserve
The first attempt to create a site to commemorate the migrant hostel's presence at Finsbury/Pennington occurred in 1993 when several organizations sought to honor the many migrants who had moved through the site with the establishment of the Pennington Gardens Reserve, dedicated as a "Garden of Memories" on a small section of the former hostel site (for more details on this memorial, see Madden 2012). Although it is not clear whether commemoration of the site began prior to or after the last migrants had moved out and the hostel shut down, the site passed into the hands of the South Australian Housing Trust in order for them to build accommodation. In partnership with the local governmental authority, the City of Hindmarsh and Woodville (now the City of Charles Sturt)**,** and the Art for Public Places Committee (Art for Everybody 1993), a small reserve was designed including a collection of cast bronze "diaries" which featured brief inscriptions of the personal memories of former hostel residents (Figure 1). Plantings in the garden also reflected both Australian native vegetation and plants from various countries from which migrants who had been housed there had originated; a semi-circular pergola structure was erected to reflect the curved nature of former hostel accommodation in Nissen huts. Over time, however, the Reserve, found itself in a new community without long-term connections to its past, and consequently became neglected and a local eyesore. The Reserve was also the victim of vandalism, the most significant of which was the theft of the cast bronze diaries (Harris 2012). The loss of these important markers resulted in a strong community response. Many former migrant hostel residents viewed their loss as an attack on their own personal histories. Aware of this strong community sentiment, and of the fact that the Pennington Gardens Reserve provided an opportunity to build on the existing "Garden of Memories" concept, in

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[8] One Nissen hut still stands at the location of Glenelg Hostel though it is unclear to what period it dates, as do two structures at the former location of Semaphore Hostel now reused as part of a local high school; commemorative plaques mark locations of a few SA hostels subsequently destroyed including Elder Park and Mallala (see Madden 2012). A re-creation of a Nissen Hut was on display at the Migration Museum from the mid-1980s till 2006, and was an extremely popular exhibit, perhaps in part due to the lack of tangible memorials in situ in association with the migrant hostels.
[9] The range of countries of origin who stayed at the Finsbury/Pennington Hostel are captured in the sixty-one oversized Arrival and Departure Registers held in the National Archives Australia: Series D2416; they include European post-war Displaced Persons; British migrants; migrants and refugees from throughout Europe, Canada, and the US; and later, refugees and migrants from Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East. Finsbury/Pennington was also used to house non-migrants including visiting country and interstate sports teams, Indigenous groups, and the evacuees from Cyclone Tracy.

2011 the City of Charles Sturt (hereafter the Council), the local council responsible for this area, began planning to make the reserve both a usable recreation space for local residents, and a place where former migrant hostel residents and others could gather. The project marked a new approach for the Council in undertaking a reserve upgrade by blending their traditional approach which centered on delivering passive recreation spaces for local residents and renewing existing attributes like-for-like, with up-to-date heritage interpretation techniques, and importantly, by being underpinned by a place-making philosophy. Fundamental to the place-making method is the idea of working with key stakeholders, in this case including past hostel residents and current local residents, to create a meaningful space that met the needs of both those seeking a space for memorialization and those who wanted a reserve that provides amenities for play and recreation.

To achieve the best outcome for the project, a collaborative approach was undertaken which allowed for broad community engagement with past hostel and local residents, as well as with external stakeholders including the South Australian Migration Museum, members of the University of Adelaide's Hostel Stories Project, and representatives of the original Indigenous people of the area, the Kaurna people, to ensure that the desired heritage interpretation outcomes were achieved. This broad community and stakeholder engagement then shaped the reserve design allowing, as Lombard (2014: 16) argues, creation of an environment where the 'individual place-making activities of one resident are as important as those of the state'.

In addition, wide-ranging consultation significantly raised the profile of the project within the local and wider communities and enthused local residents about the final result which reflected the place-making philosophies adopted by the Council as a result of the project:

> more than just activating a space, it is about the creation of meaningful areas that reflect the needs of the people who live there, the businesses that work there and the people that visit them. By empowering communities to shape their own places we can build a local sense of ownership that results in building stronger communities… The importance of place making is multi-faceted… It creates places where: People feel good and emotionally connected, Where they want to stay and return, Where they want to tell others about their experience.[10]

Community engagement also was undertaken midway through the project with an event held in the reserve in efforts to attract and engage even more community members, particularly with regard to the placement of items on the site. Following an information session, cardboard flowers, picnic blankets pegged to turfed areas, and seating and other elements, including laminated concept designs and representations of artworks, were placed within the space and left on site for a week, along with blackboards to record feedback, suggestions, and memories. This process allowed not only for ongoing community engagement, but also encouraged the local community to begin re-connecting with the site.

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[10] See http://www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/PlaceMaking

As Martin Franz, Orhan Güles, and Gisela Prey (2008: 321) argue, 'a space is a physical entity'; however, through place-making, 'spaces become places'. In this case, the key objective behind the project was to create an area of public open space that was different, interesting, and commemorative, and thus simultaneously respectful and quirky. The goal was to construct a space that could tell a fascinating story while providing an entertaining and whimsical space for younger people and which could act as a gathering place for local residents and former hostel residents, their families, and friends as well as a meaningful place of remembrance.

The (New) Pennington Gardens Reserve
While the overarching aim of the re-development of the Pennington Gardens Reserve was clear, community consultation informed the design and implementation in two distinctive ways. First, it highlighted the long history of the site and contributed to plans for addition of new elements and artistic interpretations which would communicate this deeper history. These elements included the installation of artwork representing the local Kaurna culture in order to facilitate an awareness of the diverse layers of history relating to the locality (Figure 2).[11]

Second, it made apparent that many people within the Council area had had strong connections to the Finsbury/Pennington hostel, not just as former residents but as descendants, co-workers, hostel neighbors, community support workers, and so forth. Therefore it was important that the design honor and celebrate the broader community which had been involved with the migrant center together with past residents, particularly those from later refugee groups, who had expressed clear wishes for a place to remember and celebrate their arrival in Australia with their children and grandchildren.

This collective information was used to shape the Pennington Gardens Reserve project and identify what elements and symbols should be used to tell the story of the place, including that of the migrant hostel and the experiences of those who were accommodated there. However, it was also important that personal memories were supported by detailed information about the operational history of the hostel. In addition, it was necessary to maintain the integrity of the original memorial gardens that had occupied the space previously. Thus a re-interpretation of the vandalized and stolen cast bronze diaries, which had been so close to the hearts of many of the past hostel residents, was incorporated within the new design. Building on the initial reserve interpretation, additional quotes taken from personal recollections that had been collected by the Council were used to create what was considered to be a balanced interpretation of hostel life, including both positive and negative memories and representing a diverse range of migrants in terms of date of arrival, countries of origin, and experiences. The project team also needed to be consistently mindful that the hostel itself triggers strong and diverse reactions in the minds of former residents and their families, as it was equally a place of security, opportunity, joy, and community as well as a

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[11] In order to tell a deeper history of the land, an artwork by Karl Telfer and Gavin Malone recognising Kaurna connections and heritage was commissioned which accompanies a cultural marker featuring a Q code that links to the Council's website and additional information on the Kaurna community; native plantings feature as the background to the artwork.

place of disappointment, despair, squalor, and isolation. This diversity of experiences needed to be respected and communicated in the interpretation. Thus the quotes that were selected for inclusion describe specific features of the hostel, are both positive and emotive, and were included in the two key elements that recreate the physical environment of the hostel: the Nissen hut-inspired barbecue shelter and the interpretation hoops (discussed in more detail below) seen in Figure 3.

Some of the strongest physical memories which former residents and staff communicated included the institutional-grade metal furniture, high fencing, corrugated iron, open concrete drains, tar flooring, Commonwealth-stamped eating utensils, and routine in the canteen. Accordingly, the design and form of the signage and structures at the Reserve reflect the physical environment, landscape, and the built structure of the hostel. Although the use of corrugated iron challenged many Council staff who opposed the use of such materials in a public reserve for aesthetic reasons, the inclusion of the material was integral to communicating the physical environment of the hostel as it was frequently described by former residents as a defining feature. The high fencing that confronted many hostel residents on arrival was reinterpreted as a garden trellis.

Among the strongest memories of Finsbury/Pennington, and indeed about migrant centres more generally, are connected to the food and the communal dining rooms in which it was served (Postiglione 2010; Pennay 2012; Agutter & Ankeny 2017). Therefore the inclusion of a giant cup, plate, and cutlery with Commonwealth catering markings represent part of the canteen kit issued to former residents on arrival and doubles as a unique play space for children (Figures 4-5).[12] Similarly, new furniture introduced to encourage greater community use of the reserve reflects the history of the site through design and materials, including the seating and a shelter made of corrugated iron and with a curved roof designed and constructed to represent a Nissen hut. Within the shelter are photographs, timelines, and stories related to the site. The patterns incorporated in the shelter shed and on the signage at the entrance represents two key cultural groups of residents (the British and the Vietnamese); the use of a vibrant shade of yellow that was popular in the 1960s provided a visual connection to this period which was a boom time for the hostel. From the shelter, interpretation hoops act as a "ghost" Nissen hut (see Figure 3) and form the framework for the avenue of the memory pavers which, through their purchase, provided former hostel residents and staff with the opportunity to commemorate their personal connections to the site. To date, more than 200 people associated with the hostel are recognized in the path created with the pavers, including former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and her family who immigrated from Wales. Each paver is engraved with their name, country of origin (or work area), year of arrival, and length of stay at the hostel.

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[12] Again here compromises needed to be made: an early idea to include play equipment designed to mimic what would have been present during the hostel's operation was not possible due to OHS regulations, and installation of a wok in the barbeque area was abandoned due to lack of availability of suitable industrial-grade equipment.

Through the use of the framework of place-making and the community consultation inherent in its philosophy, all of the elements within the Pennington Memorial Gardens are unique to the site and to its history.

Lessons about Place-Making to be Learned from Finsbury/Pennington
Given the centrality of place-making at Finsbury/Pennington, it is important to be aware, as Nick Gill (2010: 1157) argues, that the optimism often expressed in the place-making literature, particularly in regard to its ability to 'offer migrants common identities and a means of collective mobilising' can in fact be counterproductive for some migrant communities. In his study of Polish migrants in the United Kingdom, Gill found that as the migrants sought to establish recognition of their experiences, the very public nature of place-making increased the migrants' visibility and catalyzed racism. In the case of Finsbury/Pennington, there were some early complaints from some local residents about the dedication of the park to migrants, given broader public debates that they already are receiving too many resources, although these voices have largely fallen silent since it has been built.[13]

To date at Finsbury/Pennington, the new Reserve has been well-received, and is generally viewed as extremely inclusive not just of migrant perspectives but also those in the community who interacted with the hostel and the Kaurna community, likely due in part to the extensive community consultation processes described above. In addition, the overall design of the Reserve guarded against degradation and vandalism particularly though choice of materials, and explicitly encouraged use by providing a mixture of amenities; all structures, interpretive works, and artworks are robust, multifunctional, and designed to appeal to members of all stakeholder groups.

Place-making also can prove contentious, as it depends on use of collective retrospective remembering and inclusion, which oftentimes can be at odds with the events of the past, as shown for instance in Arthur Parkinson, Mark Scott, and Declan Redmond's research in Ireland (2017: 502–3). At Finsbury/Pennington, the combination of providing information from more documentary and archival sources alongside personal stories and quotes from former residents may inadvertently exacerbate these very sorts of tensions, at least for careful observers. In addition, while place-making philosophies advocate inclusion of components reflecting the history of a site, the tendency of local government place-making practices is to be more focused on the 'present', responding to the needs, desires, and interpretation of the past by the current residential community. These approaches can result in the creation of places that present sanitized or idealized versions of a location's historical story.

The relative lack of inclusion of more negative views on hostel experiences or about conflicts that existed at various times between various subgroups of hostel residents, based on race, politics, and/or country of origin, which have been documented in the broader Hostel Stories Project (and have been noted in the case of Bonegilla, as discussed above) also may cause

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[13] On prejudice against current-day migrants even among former migrants, see Agutter & Ankeny 2016.

disquiet among some former residents and community members who are aware of the hostel's complex history.

Jonathan Amith (2005) suggests that although place-making is generally constructive in this context, it is also simultaneously destructive as it tends to erase the previous uses of places as well as differences between migrants. Relatedly John Dixon and Kevin Durrheim (2000) discuss the fact that relationships are never fixed but constantly shifting and can therefore be rhetorically contested; this contestation particularly can occur in post-colonial contexts where different groups subscribe to diverse narrative accounts, which can initiate power struggles between competing interest groups. There also is no doubt that it is challenging to represent the lives of many ethnicities against the backdrop of a constantly changing political landscape. In the case of Bonegilla, calls for a museum or memorial were initially seen as problematic in the 1980s, which was a time of increased questioning about multiculturalism; by the 1990s and 2000, the political and social context had changed significantly, creating the conditions that permitted it to be listed as a heritage site (see e.g. Dellios 2015b). Although these types of issues have not seemed to negatively influence the reception and use of the Finsbury/Pennington site, they are critical to consider when using place-making in the context of migrant-related commemorations.

Conclusions
The remaining question that must be considered is whether the new Reserve has been a success. Answering this sort of query requires much more reflection on our criteria for success, which oftentimes are in internal conflict particularly when it comes to heritage sites. So for instance in order to capture heritage, we would wish the site to in some sense represent the diversity of those who transitioned through Finsbury/Pennington, as well as the wider community in which it was located. In addition, presenting a reasonably accurate and balanced evidence-based historical account is also important, including a location for reflection and commemoration of critical stages of migrants' lives and experiences. In some sense, the Reserve fulfills these criteria; while in other senses, it will necessarily fail due to conflicting points of view and needs, especially given the longevity of the hostel and the diversity of experiences among those who passed through it, but also as the communities, associations, and memories associated with the Reserve change over time.

Perhaps more importantly, the Reserve could be seen as promoting a problematic form of retrospective commemoration, a state effort to build an inclusive and nationalistic narrative, especially in terms of multiculturalism, 'by retrospectively commemorating a wider number of communities and people who have been officially identified as having contributed to Australia's "national development"' (Ashton 2009: 382), without adequate attention to the significant cultural, social, and political changes that have occurred over the time period in question. In addition as Sara Wills (2009) argues with regard to Bonegilla and other post-war migrant centres, commemoration can be way to use the past to recover from collective shame. Although Finsbury/Pennington perhaps is not as "uncomfortable" a site as those migrant centres such as Maribyrnong and Villawood that went on to become detention centers for asylum seekers awaiting refugee processing (Dellios 2015b), it nonetheless must bring together perspectives that can be viewed as in conflict, reflecting the distinct migration

experiences of those who came to Australia for economic, social, cultural, political, and/or religious reasons, oftentimes from locales that themselves were in internal conflict.

For success in terms of the principles of place-making, we would hope to see people feeling welcome, in part because they participated in co-creation of the locale or have some sort of connection to it, and also engaging in activities in the new place that has been created, a place which is simultaneously adaptive, disruptive, inclusive, and socially accepted. In this sense, the simultaneous presentation of diverse narratives including Indigenous and migrant perspectives, as well as of historical information side-by-side with memories and recollections, could be argued to have created a physical space which is both inclusive and contested and in which new meanings can be created, particularly by those who contributed to the Reserve and who continue to engage with it. Place can be viewed as 'the site of complex entanglements of power, [and thus] place-making offers an analytical focus through which to disentangle some of these complexities' (Lombard 2014: 15). As noted previously, place-making can allow a location such as the Reserve to become symbolic of both individual and collective experiences, since 'individual place-making activities of one resident are as important as those of the state because of the focus is on place' (16).

Thus place-making is a particularly appropriate strategy for allowing the complexities inherent in a hostel such as Finsbury/Pennington to be brought to light: the hostel was more than a state-run temporary place of accommodation or shelter. It came to be a symbol of identity, values, and sociocultural experiences that were constructed by the residents themselves and those with whom they had contact in the surrounding community. Place-making often is an highly institutionalized industry supported by multi-million dollar budgets focused on improving aesthetics via architectural and landscape design perspectives, but true community-led place-making including the strategies utilized in this case focuses on 'interventions that seek to change the status quo' (Sofield, Guia & Specht 2017: 2). Reclaiming place-making has been noted to be particularly important in the context of contemporary migration, as it permits those who have been displaced to gain a sort of 'spatial foothold' in their new locale (Byrne & Goodall 2013: 65). We contend that place-making is also critical when engaging in heritage projects with historic migrants in order to allow them to retake locales and spaces that were important passage points during their lives (such as hostels), and to shape their ongoing use and thus their symbolic and other meanings.

Acknowledgements

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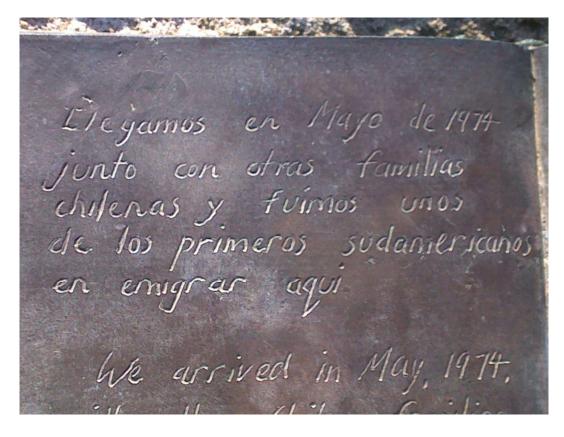
Figure 1: Beginning of the Bronze Diary inscription from memories of Alicia Villaroel (who immigrated from Peru in the mid-1970s), part of the Garden of Memories at the Pennington Migrant Hostel, constructed by the local artists Angela and Hossein Valamanesh in 1993. Photo by Joshua Lagrutta (as part of a Faculty of Arts Internship project, University of Adelaide) and provided to the Migration Museum in 2010.

Figure 2: Senior Kaurna Custodian, Karl Winda Telfer, and City of Charles Sturt CEO Mark Withers dedicating the Kaurna recognition marker at the launch of the renovated Pennington Gardens Reserve, October 2013. Photo provided by the City of Charles Sturt.

Figure 3: The Nissen hut-inspired barbecue shelter at the Pennington Gardens Reserve. Photo provided by the City of Charles Sturt.

Figure 4: Oversized sculpture of dining items marked with Commonwealth hostel logos at the Pennington Gardens Reserve. Photo provided by the City of Charles Sturt.

Figure 5: Use of the public art by children from families who have recently migrated to Australia and are now residing in the Council area at the launch of the renovated Pennington Gardens Reserve, October 2013. Photo provided by the City of Charles Sturt.