



ISSN 2754-5547

<https://doi.org/10.52230/CDZS3895>

‘Fay Anderson et al. (Editors), Picturing Citizenship: Images, Belonging and Colonial Legacies in the Settler Nation’

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To cite this book review: Jatinder Mann, ‘Fay Anderson et al. (Editors), Picturing Citizenship: Images, Belonging and Colonial Legacies in the Settler Nation’, *Journal of Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies* 6 (September 2026): 170-171, <https://doi.org/10.52230/HTRF4318>

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Fay Anderson, Jane Lydon, Melissa Miles, and Amanda Nettelbeck (Editors), *Picturing Citizenship: Images, Belonging and Colonial Legacies in the Settler Nation* (Bloomsbury, 2025), 264pp. Hardback. £85. ISBN: 978-1-3504-5588-7.

Having expertise on citizenship in Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand I was immediately interested in reviewing this edited book by Anderson et al. This was despite (or perhaps because of) the quite different approach the book takes to the subject (compared to the focus of most studies on legislation and policy) – namely the representation of citizenship in visual culture. And I have to say that I was certainly not disappointed. I found the book extremely engaging and it also contains some beautiful images, all in colour, which is a rare sight in academic books. Another unusual thing about the book is the shorter than usual number of chapters you tend to find in most edited collections (eight chapters including an Introductory one). However, I think this is a strength of the book as it allows the chapter authors to go into more depth than they you would normally have the space to do. However, due to the limitations of space in this review I will focus on two chapters from each of the two sections of the book, which will hopefully give an overview of its main themes.

‘Apirana Ngata, John Pascoe and *The Ngārimu Hui: Picturing Māori Citizenship in 1940s Aotearoa New Zealand*’ by Angela Wanhalla, Lachy Paterson, Sarah Christie, and Erica Newman explores the booklet produced about the posthumous awarding of the Victoria Cross to the parents of the late Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngārimu at a large hui (gathering) in his community which was photographed extensively by John Pascoe. However, the event was the brainchild of Māori politician Apirana Ngata who saw an opportunity to highlight the significant Māori contribution to the country’s war effort in the Second World War (exemplified by the famous Māori Battalion and despite being exempt from compulsory military service 14% of the entire Māori population of Aotearoa New Zealand actively served in the Second World War) to Pākehā especially, as well as advance his policy of war service as an act of citizenship amongst Māori. Ngata strongly believed that strong Māori military service would strengthen their demands for equal citizenship rights after the war. The photographs taken by Pascoe not only at the hui but at other prominent Māori events, all of which he left to the National Library in Wellington are a wonderful legacy which have been utilized by governments ever since.

Melissa Miles’ ‘Citizenship, Art and Aspiration: “New Australian” Artists in the Post-War Period’ focuses on the art produced by ‘New Australians’ (non-British migrants that arrived in Australia after the Second World War, primarily from Central and Eastern Europe). Miles quite rightly emphasises that post-Second World War governments at the time promoted the art produced by New Australians as a form of commitment to their new homeland, especially when artists produced portraits of Australia’s Princess and then Queen Elizabeth II during her royal tour to Australia in the early 1950s. Nothing could demonstrate loyalty to their new homeland more than this as Australia very much saw itself as a British country at the time. There was an important subtext to this as governments were keen to reassure Anglo-Celtic Australians that the mass non-British immigration that Australia was experiencing would not change the Britannic identity of the country. But the chapter also illustrates the ability of some New Australian artists to try to continue producing their art despite very difficult circumstances – primarily having to work on large public infrastructure projects in remote parts of the country as a part of their two-year compulsory government work contracts on arrival or the spartan accommodation (quite often military barracks) that they were housed in during this period.

'Photographic Acts of Refugee Citizenship' by Thy Phu is probably one of the most unique chapters in the book, as it focuses on refugees – not the first group that comes to mind when you think about citizens. But Phu studies Indo-Chinese refugees from the 1970s and 1980s primarily who arrived in Canada and the United States of America as refugees. The chapter discusses some of the photos that parents (most often mothers) took of themselves and their children when they were in refugee camps in Asia (very often in extremely cramped and desperate conditions) or after they arrived in North America. Phu makes the interesting point that many took photos in the latter to prove to their family back home that they had made it to their new home. The chapter also tackles the issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) when it comes to more recent refugees, especially from Africa and the Middle East. Phu provides several examples where biased AI algorithms impacted negatively on the citizenship applications of former refugees from these regions in their new home countries. Furthermore, the chapter draws attention to some infamous cases of even Human Rights NGOs inadvertently putting refugees' lives at risk when they publicly shared photos of them protesting on social media, where they could be identified by the regimes of their home countries using FRT. But Phu makes the important point that photography is one of the few ways in which refugees can exercise any sort of agency in a process that often feels like it is completely out of their control.

Jane Lydon's 'Dark Beach: Visual Assertions of Australian Citizenship' looks at the place of probably one of the most archetypal symbols of Australia: 'the beach' in conceptualisations of citizenship. The chapter firstly discusses the famous 'Aussie' posters produced by artist Peter Drew which began appearing in cities all over Australia since 2016. The goal of which according to the artist was to highlight that non-White Australians were just as much part of the Australian national fabric as their white counterparts were. Lydon then turns to examining the work of various artists who have tried to draw attention to Australia's infamous offshore detention policy for 'illegal' asylum seekers. Hoda Afshar's Portrait of Behrouz Boochani, Manus Island (2018) is a very poignant piece by someone who was detained at the offshore detention centre there for over a decade. The chapter then ends by exploring the wonderful efforts of some First Australian artists to reframe classic Australian paintings by including First Australians in them. Dianne Jones' *Sunbaker* (2003) is an excellent and very effective example of this. Lydon's chapter also provides some very useful historical context to all the above – namely the history of the White Australia Policy, Australia's infamous offshore detention policy, and the false legal doctrine of Terra Nullius.

I enjoyed reading this book and found it incredibly thought-provoking. I strongly recommend it to readers, although it will probably appeal more to specialist readers rather than general, as some of the chapters are a little dense.

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