

UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.08 pm]: I would like to inform the house that the Western Australian Ukrainian community is celebrating its seventieth anniversary of migration to Australia. In 1948, Australia began admitting increased numbers of Ukrainian migrants. They had been displaced from their homelands by the enforced famine and the atrocities of World War II. The vast majority of them had spent the early post-war years in displaced persons' camps in Germany and Austria. Over the next four years, a significant number of Ukrainians began arriving in Australia, keen to rebuild their lives and start again.

This year, Ukrainian communities throughout Australia are commemorating the seventieth anniversary of these first arrivals. The year 2018 also marks the eighty-fifth anniversary of Holodomor, the famine in Ukraine caused by the deliberate actions of Stalin's Soviet regime. For many Western Australian Ukrainians, these are extremely emotional anniversaries, revisiting the stories of those who escaped from the horrors of war-torn Europe to the safety of Australia.

The first Ukrainian migrants to Western Australia arrived at the port of Fremantle on 11 October 1948 on the HMAS *Kanimbla*. The group of 60 men, who had sailed from Germany, were welcomed by the authorities, and then formed a dancing group and a choir so that they could hold a thankyou concert for Western Australians. Another ship, the *SS Amarapoora*, arrived in Fremantle on 21 April 1949, carrying a further group of Ukrainian migrants. After arrival in Australia, they wrote to the then Minister for Immigration in the following terms, according to my notes —

We have left the shattered, destroyed and ruined Europe of these times and have landed on the sunny and hospitable shores of Australia with the firm resolve that we will utilise all our strength, our toil and our knowledge for the welfare and development for our new land.

Through these we hope that a better future and the good will of the people will be assured.

These migrants, many of whom went on to work in the goldmines in Kalgoorlie, on the railway lines around Perth, on the construction of Mundaring Weir, and on many other projects, farms and businesses, certainly did Western Australia proud. They worked hard, formed families and built up their community, giving much back to Western Australia and helping to make this state the place it is today.

I was honoured to greet 18 of those early pioneer men and women recently, and I was privileged to hear their stories.