accommodation needs. Buildings were sometimes relocated to help migrants identify with the British heritage of Australia. Arms to help migrants identify with monarchs and the British coats-of-arms showed, dances and concerts. It was used by the Australian Army. Dietary guidelines similar to those used by the Australian Army, employment office was used by centre staff for recreation. There were usually 200 to 300 employees at any one time working as employment officers, health workers, cooks, patrol men, welfare officers and chiligoth attendant. Many migrants won their first Australian job at the centre.

Chapel
Chaplains and church associations helped cater for the needs of religious. Church groups offered solace and opportunities for developing new social networks. Currently off limits to the public.

Accommodation huts
In the early years women and children were housed separately from the men. In the latter years, huts were modified to accommodate family groups. Large families were sometimes allocated adjacent cubicles. Each person received an allocation of linen and grey woollen blankets and other items they would need during their stay.

Staff club / Employment office
The Hume Public Service Club was used by centre staff for recreation. There were usually 200 to 300 employees at any one time working as employment officers, health workers, cooks, patrol men, welfare officers and chiligoth attendant.

Kitchen and messes
Each block at Bonegilla had its own kitchen and mess halls. The Department of Immigration followed dietary guidelines similar to those used by the Australian Army. Migrants queued for food, cared for their own crockery and cutlery, and listened out for others speaking their native language.

Tudor Hall
This large recreational hall was one of several social hubs located in the accommodation centre and was used for all celebrations including picture shows, dances and concerts. It was called Tudor Hall because it contained pictures of the Tudor monarchs and the British coat-of-arms to help migrants identify with the British heritage of Australia.

Demolished or removed
Accommodation huts and other buildings were sometimes relocated within the accommodation centre as per accommodation needs.

Welcome Centre
Collect a site map and explore ways to research your family links. Book the Bonegilla Function Space for a family reunion or arrange accommodation if you plan to stay a few days. Refreshments and memorabilia are available. Pre-booked guided tours depart from here.

The Beginning Place
Introduces why people came to Australia searching for a new beginning and features the Whispering Wall.

Recreation Hut
The task of placing people in accommodation if you plan to for a family reunion or arrange pre-booked guided tours depart from here.

Memorial plaque sculpture and passage, an interactive play space that features an animated mural depicting life at Bonegilla and the stories of the men and women who were accommodated here. The Arc, an interactive play space that features an animated mural depicting life at Bonegilla and the stories of the men and women who were accommodated here.

Bonegilla Migrant Experience
132 Bonegilla Rd, Bonegilla VIC 3691
PO Box 923, Wodonga VIC 3689
P: (02) 6020 6912
E: bonegilla@wodonga.vic.gov.au
W: bonegilla.org.au

Bonegilla Migrant Experience @bonegillame
#BonegillaMigrantExperience #BonegillaME

Site open 10am to 4pm, seven days a week.
Closed Anzac Day, Good Friday and Christmas Day.

Guided Tours
During the week and Sunday - 11am and 2pm.

During Victorian and NSW school holidays, tours will be hosted daily. Contact the site for tour times.

Private and group tours available by appointment.

Ramp access available in selected buildings only.

Take care when making your way around the site as wildlife inhabits our land. Please do not approach the kangaroos as they can be unpredictable when disturbed.

Block 19 Bonegilla
Bonegilla Migrant Experience and Training Centre, which received and trained migrants to Australia following World War II.

The centre was big and at its busiest housed up to 8000 people, occasionally in tents but usually in large accommodation huts. Women and children were housed separately from men, until huts were partitioned into cubicles for families. When the centre first opened, each week saw hundreds of people arriving from Melbourne docks. The trains, known as “red rattlers”, offloaded passengers at the Bonegilla siding. Luggage was collected and then people were ready for the short trip across to the migrant reception centre, where staff prided themselves on serving a hot meal within an hour of arrival. Later migrants, particularly the Dutch, arrived by plane through Australia’s only international airport in Sydney.

Initially, only displaced persons from refugee camps in Europe were selected. As demand for labour increased and Australian immigration officials realised they could not meet the government’s migration quota, the opportunity to migrate was opened up to the assisted migrants. Every person over 16 years, whether assisted migrant or displaced person, signed a contract stating their willingness to work for two years in any job, in any part of Australia.

Qualifications, work experience and education were not considered. When your job allocation ran out, you were expected to return to Bonegilla to wait for your next opportunity.

Today the centre touches the lives of millions of Australians. One in 20 Australians have either a parent, brother, sister, uncle, aunty or grandparent who spent time at Bonegilla before work allocations dispersed them Australia-wide.