

Documentary Westlanders in Australia

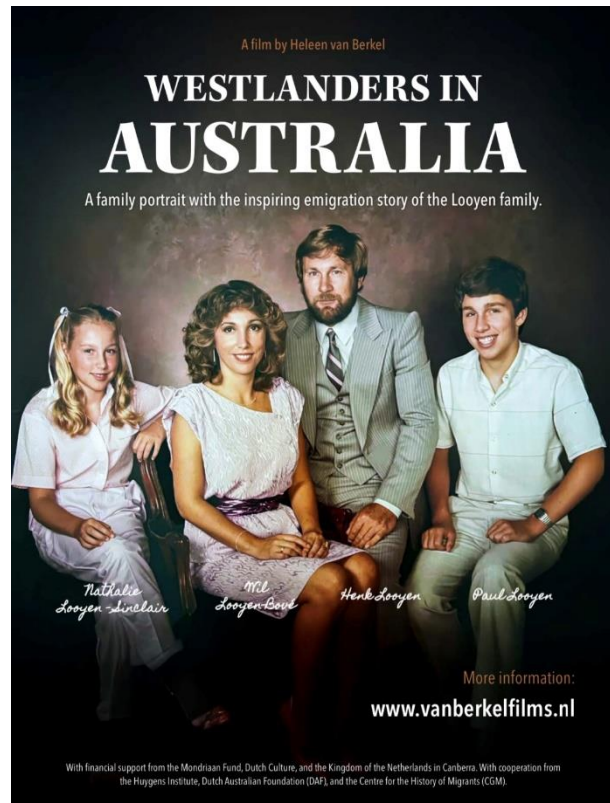
Westlanders in Australia – The documentary tells the story of the Looyen family, who emigrated from the Netherlands to Australia in 1976. It is not just about emigration but also explores the impact it has on identity and belonging. The film will be available online starting March 22 on Van Berkel Films' YouTube channel.

The story of the Looyen family

In 1976, the 'typical Dutch family' Looyen – Henk, Wilhelmina, and their children Paul and Nathalie – emigrated from Ter Heijde (Westland, the Netherlands) to Australia. They sailed on the ship *Australis*, looking for a new life. Henk started a construction company, and Wilhelmina's parents had already moved to Australia to open a restaurant called Pierre's Mill in Redcliffe. Wil's father owned a café named 'De Sport' in Ter Heijde. Before leaving for Australia, Henk worked as a greenhouse builder, and he shares his experiences in the film.

More than just emigration

Westlanders in Australia tells more than just the story of the Looyen family's emigration. It also explores the questions immigrants ask themselves about their identity and sense of connection. It delves deeper into themes as migration and mercantile. How do you keep your Dutch roots alive in a new country? What does emigration really mean?



What does emigration mean?

The documentary looks at the personal and emotional side of emigration. What does it mean to leave everything behind and start over in a new country? It is not just a story of facts, but also a journey to find a new home and a new identity.

Venues

The première of the documentary 'Westlanders in Australia' will take place during the Holland Melbourne Festival on the 15th of March and on the 22nd of March in the Redcliffe Museum in Australia. *Westlanders in Australia* will be available to watch online starting March 22 on Van Berkel Films' YouTube channel and other platforms, such as www.vijfeeuwenmigratie.nl and Australian media. The documentary also offers opportunities to participate in exhibitions, panel discussions, and academic sessions.

About the project

The documentary is an initiative of filmmaker Heleen van Berkel, following successful crowdfunding and collaboration with museums, archives, and cultural professionals in both

countries. It received financial support from the Mondriaan Fund, Dutch Culture, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Canberra (Australia), with additional thanks to the Huygens Institute, the Dutch Australian Foundation (DAF), and the Centre for Migrant History (CGM).

For more information:

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