

PRESS RELEASE

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Exhibit on the Manilamen Launched in Broome, Western Australia



(L-R) Third Secretary Nicole de Castro, author Dr. Deborah Ruiz Wall and descendants of the Manilamen Cauline Masuda and Kevin Puertollano. Kevin Puertollano holds a map of Marinduque, the Philippine province where his forefather Thomas Puertollano came from.

BROOME, Australia (04 September 2017) – The Philippine Embassy in Australia opened the exhibit “Re-imagining Australia: Voices of Indigenous Australians of Filipino Descent” in Broome, Western Australia on 4 September 2017 as part of the Shinju Matusuri Festival (Festival of the Pearl). The exhibit is based on the book of the same title by Dr. Deborah Ruiz Wall OAM with Dr. Christine Choo.

Re-imagining Australia tells the stories of the *Manilamen* – the first Filipinos who arrived in Australia to take part in Australia’s thriving pearling industry starting in the 1860s – as told by their descendants. Broome was one of the first places where the Manilamen settled and where some of their descendants still live today.

H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz, Philippine Ambassador to Australia, said in her message delivered by Third Secretary Nicole de Castro, “*This history provides us with an opportunity to appreciate the depth and breadth of the people-to-people linkages between the Philippines and Australia long before diplomatic relations were established in 1946. We thank the descendants for being generous with their time and experiences and enriching our knowledge of how truly intertwined the fates of our two countries and peoples are.*”

Dr. Deborah Ruiz Wall gave a background on how she was inspired to write the book and talked about the contributions of the *Manilamen* and their families to the Broome’s development and the challenges they faced.

The descendants of the *Manilamen*, the Filipinos and Australians in Broome and organizers of the Shinju Matusuri Festival were among the guests in the exhibit opening.

The exhibit is the Philippine Embassy's contribution to Shinju Matsuri Festival which is a celebration of many cultures that shaped Broome during the peak of the prosperous pearl industry

The exhibit will be open to the public from 5 to 10 September 2017 at the Broome Civic Centre. END



Guests of the exhibit opening view the panels of the exhibit which tell the stories of the first Filipinos who arrived in Broome and Torres Strait Island as told by their descendants.



Guests of the exhibit hold a copy of the book "Re-imagining Australia: Voices of Indigenous Australians of Filipino Descent" by Dr. Deborah Ruiz Wall OAM with Dr. Christine Choo.