

A changing workforce

In the early 1950s labour shortages were affecting the progress of construction on the Lawson Syphons near Deniliquin.

A wave of immigrants from Britain and many other European countries at this time provided much needed manpower. At one stage more than 20 different nationalities were represented among those employed on the project.

Many of the workers lived in barracks at the construction camp near the Aljoes Creek. During the 16 years it took to complete the syphons thousands of people were involved in the project.

At the peak of construction there were more than 300 people on the payroll, with three shifts operating 24 hours a day.

Some workers were transient, others stayed to make their home in Deniliquin, contributing to the cultural diversity of the local community.

Former workers on the project have helped to compile the following list of those who helped to build the syphons, although this list is by no means complete.

Lawson Syphons & Deniboota District Construction Staff

Ken	Armstead	Engineer
Norman	Arnott	Store keeper
Wally	Bartholomew	Foreman
Jack	Bass	Senior Clerk
Stuart	Bass	Clerk - district office
Ian	Bolton	District Engineer (operations)
Jimmy	Bonaddio	Labourer
Giuseppe	Bonaddio	
Jim	Boucher	
John	Boyce	Labourer (concrete gang)
Harry	Bridge	
	Broom	Engineer
Jim	Buchanan	Pile frame crew
Ron	Butcher	Foreman syphon construction
Jack	Canobi	Leading hand rigger (pile-driving)
Mick	Caruso	
Claude	Cassidy	Ganger
Adrian	Celli	Labourer
Ron	Chivers	
Tony	Coombe	Plant operator
Tom	Cooper	Ganger
Tom	Cooper	
CC	Corbett	District Engineer (survey work)
Joe	Damiania	
Cas	Damiania	
Jim	Danckert	Clerk
C	Dandrea	
Mac	Darchy	Clerk
Gordon	Denham	Clerk
Gordon	Diamond	Clerk
Bill	Dickens	Ganger
Adrian	Douglas	Engineer
Rod	Druitt	Plant operator
Reg	Dunn	Carpenter
Peter	Duyndam	Concrete gang
Stumpy	Fields	Dragline operator
Russell	Fisher	
AC	Fitznead	Engineer
Richard	Foster	Engineer (cadet)
Max	Fraser	Fitter
Vic	Georgina	
Stony	Gercovich	Dragline operator
Jim	Gleeson	Clerk
Noel	Greaves	Chainman
Geoff	Grimision	Clerk (district)
Cyril (Mick)	Hall	Timekeeper
Charlie	Hall	Construction foreman/truck driver
Tom	Hall	Ganger (pile frame)
Ian	Hamilton	Fitter
Dudley	Hamilton	Store
Colin	Harvey	Clerk
John	Haynes	Ganger (steel works)
Rosemary	Hely	Stenographer
Bruce	Hely	Engineer (cadet)
Maurice	Henderson	Clerk
Joe	Heterington	Time keeper
Brian	Hetherington	
Jack	Holden	Store keeper
Bob	Hom	Engineer (Wakool)
Bob	Home	Engineer (Wakool)
Jaroslav (Jerry)	Hrasky	Concrete tester
Claude	Hubbard	Chainman
Vic	Hubbard	Dragline operator
Bert	Hunter	Mechanic
Ray	Hyland	Engineer
Harry	James	Engineer channel construction 1954
Shirley	Johnstone	Stenographer (married name Powell)
Graham	Jones	
Ray	Jones	
Barry	Jones	
Tom	Kelly	Clerk
Hector	King	Ganger 1945
RFR	Kirby	Engineer
Fred	Lance	Welder (workshop)
Bill	Laughlin	
Bill	Lawford	Foreman (mechanical workshop)
Peter (Petrus)	Leifting	Concrete gang
Arthur	Locarnini	
Peter	Mancini	Mechanical engineer
Chris	Manic	Plumber
Herbert	Marion	Senior Clerk
Don	Marr	Engineer
Merv	Marshall	
Italo	Masolin	Plant operator (bulldozer)



Migrant workers at the Lawson Syphons construction site, near Deniliquin. Photo: Pasquetti family, Griffith

Dorothy	Matheson	Stenographer
S	Mazzeo	
Cornelius	McAuliffe	
Harry	McCall	Labourer
Frank	McLeod	Concrete gang
Eric	Morgan	
Herbert	Mount	Clerk
Pat	Murphy	
JW	Murray	Resident Engineer
Eric	Nicholas	Resident Engineer
Harold	Nightingale	
Cliff	Parker	Ganger
Steve	Pascoe	Dragline operator
A	Pasquetti	
S	Pasquetti	
Neville (Toby)	Patterson	
Merv	Peers	Perry dragline operator
Peter	Peso	Ganger
John	Pym	Engineer (cadet)
Walter	Rayson	Clerk
Paddy	Reid	
Ashley	Rosin	
B	Ruberto	
Rupert	Rundle	Labourer
Learco	Salvatore	
Joe	Scott	Store keeper
Max	Scott	Engineer
Robert	Scott	
Vincenzo	Scutti	
Claude	Shand	Welder (workshop)
Bill	Shattoch	Resident Engineer 1949
Bill	Shearer	
Barney	Shields	
Bill	Short	Fitter (workshop)
B	Simeoni	
Victor	Simic	Labourer
John	Sinclair	
Marty	Sprong	
Ron	Stapleton	Engineer (cadet)
Stan	Stonham	Truck driver
Clarence	Stratton	Ganger
Tim	Suttie	Mechanical engineer
Bob	Sutton	
Harry	Symmons	Fitter
Tony	Tarallo	Concrete gang
NG	Thom	Engineer
Ross	Thomson	
Ellis	Thornley	
Ellis	Thornton	
James	Tobin	
James	Todd	Engineer
Peggy	Triffitt	Stenographer
John	Van De Walle	Labourer/concreter
Wilhelmus (Bill)	van Niel	Leading hand (concrete gang)
Tony	Vidal	Engineer
Arthur	Wade	
John	Walker	Engineer (cadet)