Migrant Journeys – New Zealand Taxi Drivers tell their Stories

Belt up and get comfortable. You are in for a hair-raising and moving ride! *Migrant Journeys – New Zealand Taxi Drivers tell their Stories* is more than a book: the collected stories of fourteen migrant cab drivers are a compelling testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

These eloquent interviews provide a vivid window onto the world of the immigrant experience. This latest publication from Bridget Williams Books arrives as Europe and the West face unprecedented demand to accommodate refugees exiled by war and sectarian conflict – and as New Zealand's role in addressing this crisis is being questioned. The release next month of *Migrant Journeys* could hardly be more timely: this is an important and compassionate contribution to a deeper understanding of multicultural New Zealand.

Sensitively edited by Adrienne Jansen and Liz Grant, *Migrant Journeys* reveals the diversity of immigrants' origins and backgrounds, and a range of experience on arrival in this country.

Thus we meet Sunny Kong who negotiates his way to a future through the Khmer Rouge's Cambodian killing fields; and Dr Hassan Ibrahim, imprisoned and beaten in Somalia, separated from his wife for long periods before finally arriving in New Zealand as a refugee – where he worked three jobs, drove a taxi and studied towards a PhD in development and community studies; also Suia Tuiavii-Tuulua, for whom driving helps with the additional financial commitments of having a Samoan chiefly title conferred on her husband.

There is Muneer Oraha from Iraq, Branko Zgomba from Serbia, Rajesh Gordon from India, Mohammad Nazier Mohammad from Afghanistan – and others, all with arresting stories to tell. While a sense of heartfelt gratitude towards their adopted country permeates the book, its narrators do not shrink from describing the difficulties faced in adapting to life here, nor the challenges confronted: for some it is the exposure to a cruel and casual racism; for others the struggle, despite evident skills, experience or professional qualifications, to find suitable employment.

Speaking with searing honesty, the people in *Migrant Journeys* talk eloquently about the sacrifices made and hardships endured on often tortuous journeys to a foreign country in the South Pacific. Their stories, informative, quietly heroic and humbling, cast fresh light on the routine taxi ride – and on the inner lives of those migrants who have, by choice or circumstance, come to call New Zealand home.

> *So six of us talked about how to set up a taxi business.... A lot of people said, 'Hey, you guys are Iraqis, so why did you choose the name Kiwi Cabs?' Well, wherever we live, we want to be part of it. I am living here, and I want to serve this place as well as I can. That's how we were thinking when we established this company.*
>
> Muneer Oraha, Managing Director, Kiwi Cabs, Wellington

For more information please contact:
Hannah August
+64 4 473 8128 | hannah.august@bwb.co.nz

Bridget Williams Books
PO Box 12474 | Wellington 6144 | New Zealand
+64 4 473 8128 | info@bwb.co.nz | www.bwb.co.nz

BRIDGET WILLIAMS BOOKS

Migrant Journeys

New Zealand Taxi Drivers tell their Stories

Adrienne Jansen & Liz Grant

Portraits by Michael Hall

You're at the airport. You want a cab so you head for the long line of taxis sitting on the rank. You take the first. Chances are the driver will be a first generation migrant – the taxi industry in New Zealand has become a microcosm of multiculturalism.

Adrienne Jansen and Liz Grant

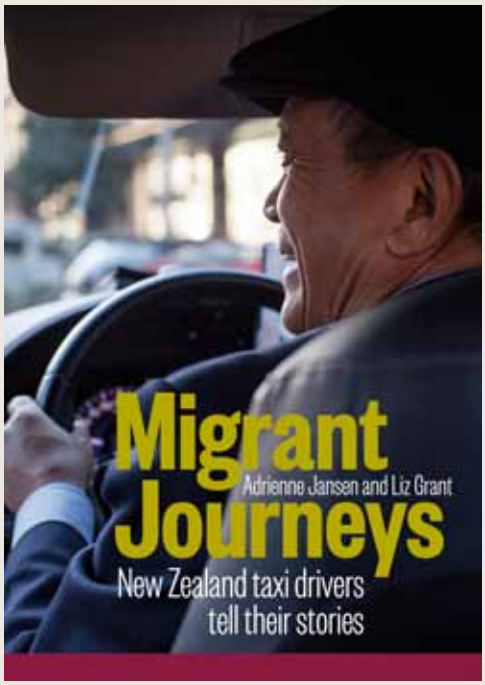
Migrant Journeys is about driving taxis in New Zealand cities – and it is about much more than that. Here fourteen migrant taxi drivers talk about their lives – where they came from and why they came here, what it was like to settle in New Zealand, how they got into the taxi business, and how they see this country and its people.

Some of the drivers came as refugees, others in the hope of making a better life for their families. They came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Croatia, Fiji, India, Iraq, Samoa, Serbia and Somalia, and many have professional or skilled backgrounds, with qualifications and experience in their home countries. Although some speak of disillusionment and disappointment, others talk of new opportunities, or the flexibility of being 'your own boss' as a taxi driver. And at the heart of these 'migrant journeys' lies the future of their family and children.

The authors

Adrienne Jansen has written or collaborated on several books about migrant experience in New Zealand, including *I have in my arms both ways* and *The Crescent Moon: The Asian Face of Islam in New Zealand*. A Winston Churchill Fellow in 1990, Adrienne has also published fiction and poetry. She teaches in the Whitireia Creative Writing Programme, and for ten years worked as a writer at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Liz Grant is a writer and editor with a background in journalism and broadcasting. She grew up in Tanzania and in her teens came with her family to New Zealand. She is the author of three previous books of non-fiction, and for three years headed the writing team at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Now working freelance, she writes and does production work largely for the museum sector.



RRP$39.99 | 240 x 170 mm
208 pages
ISBN 9781927277331
ISTC A022014000005587
Print publication November 2015

Published by Bridget Williams Books

Launch information

5:30p.m., Thursday 20 November
National Library of New Zealand
Cnr. Molesworth and Aitken Streets
Thorndon
Wellington

The authors and certain taxi drivers are available for interview. Please contact Hannah August: hannah.august@bwb.co.nz or 04 473 8128.



Adrienne Jansen



Liz Grant

For more information please contact:
Hannah August
+64 4 473 8128 | hannah.august@bwb.co.nz

Bridget Williams Books
PO Box 12474 | Wellington 6144 | New Zealand
+64 4 473 8128 | info@bwb.co.nz | www.bwb.co.nz