



JOURNEYS **THREADS OF HOME**



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Acknowledgement of Country

Logan City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways across the City of Logan. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. They hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Australia's First Peoples.

Tsoomfwv Pawg Tswj nroog Logan City Council xam pom lees paub Cov Tswv Teb Tswv Chaw (Tswv Toj Tswv Av Tswv Dej Tswv Kav). Peb hwm hawm Cov Coj Noj Coj Ua yav dhau, tiam tshiab tam sim no thiab tej xeeb leej xeeb ki tom ntej. Lawv yog cov tuav kev cim nco, kab lig kev cai thiab lawv yog thawj pab neeg uas tsim tho tau txoj kev cia siab rau lub tebchaws Australia.

HHNQNG JOURNEYS THREADS OF HOME

Hmong Journeys: Threads of Home invites you to explore the vibrant heritage and enduring resilience of the Hmong community through personal stories, traditional textiles, musical instruments, and cherished belongings. This exhibition honours the lived experiences of Hmong residents in the City of Logan, tracing their journeys from homelands in Southeast Asia to new beginnings in Australia.

As the Hmong community commemorate 50 years of their settlement in Australia following the Vietnam War, this exhibition is both a celebration and a reflection. These stories reveal how Hmong identity is woven into the fabric of Logan's multicultural community, highlighting narratives of migration, memory and belonging. This exhibition is an invitation to walk alongside these journeys and to connect with themes of home, heritage and hope.

This brochure is presented in both English and Hmong languages.

Hmoob kev tsiv teb tsaws chaw: Kev rhais roj nruam hla mus rau lub tsev tshiab caw koj los kawm tshawb txog yam ruaj khov thiab tuaj yeem nyiaj ntxeem peem dhau los ntawm tsevneeg Hmoob uas nqi sua txog tuskheej zaj dabneeg, Hmoob tej tsoos, cuab yeej suab paj nruag, thiab yam tshwj xeeb muaj nqis ntawm Hmoob ntiag tug. Lub koobtsheej kev nthuav qhia no hwm hawm qhuas txog tsevneeg Hmoob txoj kev noj nyob rau hauv lub Nroog Logan, ncaim vaj tso tsev cia rau sab Hnubtuaj Qabteb Esxias mus txhim tsa lub neej tshiab rau tebchaws Australia.

Txhawm ua kev peb nco txog 50 xyoo uas tau tuaj nyob rau Australia, lub koobtsheej kev nthuav qhia no nqi sua txogtxoj kev zoo siab rau lub ntuj tshiab thiab ua kev cim xeeb rov nco txog lub neej yav dhau. Cov dabneeg no qhia tau tias Hmoob yog ib tsa neeg uas muaj txiaj ntsim nyob hauv nroog Logan ib yam nkaus li luag lwm kuj cuab pab pawg neeg poob teb poob chaw.

Phau ntawv no nthuav tawm ua lus Askiv thiab lus Hmoob.

Cover image: Close-up of a Hmong story cloth depicting traditional ceremonies, celebrating communal gatherings and the sharing of food and drink. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025

Left image: Sally Terare (Butchulla, Bundjalung), *Wander Free*, 2020



The history of the Hmong people

The Hmong are an ethnic subgroup who have a unique culture of their own. Hmong people originated in China, where approximately 2 million lived in the fertile lowlands of Southern China. However, due to political unrest the Hmong migrated to highland provinces such as Yunnan and Guizhou. Their struggle with the Chinese government continued for 200 years until they were defeated in 1854, prompting their migration to Laos and Vietnam.

Hmong people chose to live in peace and preferred their own government, so many migrated naturally to the hills and mountaintops, forming villages. The Hmong people faced many adversities and government challenges throughout the decades; their strength and resilience carried their communities through to 1962 when communism presented challenges to the Hmong living traditionally in the highlands. During the Vietnam War the Hmong in Laos were recruited by the United States CIA to fight against communist forces in what became known as the 'Secret War'. Boys as young as 12 years old were drafted to be a part of this secret army. This led to devastating death counts of Hmong people in the fight to protect their home in Laos. In 1975, President Ford pulled a defeated U.S. Army out of Southeast Asia. With no other choices, many Hmong attempted the treacherous journey to Thailand by foot and raft, crossing the Mekong River to escape violent raids and massacres. Hmong that survived the long journey found themselves in refugee camps in Nong Khai, Thailand. Many Hmong people remained in these camps in harsh conditions for years before resettling in several countries including the United States, Australia, France and Canada.

The history of the Hmong people shows their courage, sacrifice and loyalty to their home and people. Hmong people have had extraordinary resilience, preserved their culture and rebuilt their communities across the globe.

Keebkwm ntawm haiv neeg Hmoob

Hmoob yog ib tsa neeg muaj kab lis kev cai tshwj xeeb ntawm lawv tuskheej. Hmoob xeev txawm nyob rau Suav teb, Hmoob muaj thaj tsam li ntawm ob roob (ob lab) tus tib neeg tau nyob rau suam av zoo ua noj ua haus ntawm sab Qabteb hauv tebchaws Suav. Li cas los xij, vim muaj kev tsis sib haum xeeb txog kev nom kev tswv kev teb kev chaw yog li Hmoob thiaj tau txav mus nyob rau yav toj siab ntawm nroog Yunnan thiab Guizhou. Vim yog txoj kev kov tsis yeej Tsoomfwv los tau ob puas xyoo uas txog kawg lawv tau swb Suav rog rau xyoo 1854, lawv thiaj tau tsiv teb tsaws chaw mus rau Nplog thiab Nyablaj.

Hmoob xaiv los mus nyob kaj siab lug thiab nyob muaj nom muaj tswv ntawm lawv tuskheej yog li Hmoob thiaj tau tsiv mus ua zej zog rau yav toj roob hauv pes. Hmoob tau ntsib ntau yam kev nyuaj siab thiab kev sib tw los ntawm tsoomfwv los tau ntau caum lub xyoo; lawv lub zog lub peev xwm thiab txoj kev ruaj khov tau coj lawv los txog ntua rau xyoo 1962 uas yog thaum tog Koojsam tau tuaj rhuav tshem Hmoob lub neej kev ywj pheej nyob rau yav toj roob hauv pes. Thaum Tsov Rog Nyablaj, cov Hmoob nyob rau hauv Nplog teb tau raug lim xaiv los ntawm Teb Chaws Asmeskas CIA los tawm tsam cov tub rog koojsam uas tom qab no muab hu ua "Secret War: Tsov Rog Zais". Cov tub hluas li kaum ob xyoo tau raug xaiv los mus muaj feem ua tub rog tiv thaiv lawv li zej zog hauv tebchaws Nplog. Xyoo 1975, Thawj Tswj Hwm Ford tau rho tub rog Asmeskas tawm ntawm sab Hnubtuaj Qabteb Esxias. Thaum no Hmoob thiaj tau ntuj taw khiav thiab txiav xyoo txiav ntoos tsuam phuj hla tus niam dej Mejkhoom mus rau Thabteb. Txoj kev phomsij khiav tsov khiav rog no tau ua rau Hmoob tau raug txhom tsim txom thiab raug tua tuag yam suav tsis txheeb. Cov muaj hmoo kuj peem siav dim mus txog rau cov yeej thojnam hauv nroog Nong Khai, Thabteb. Hmoob tau los mus khom so nyob rau cov yeej no yam txom nyem ntsuav los tau ntau xyoo ua ntej tau tuaj mus txhim tsa lub neej tshiab nyob txawv tebchaws uas yog Asmeskas, Australia, Fabkis thiab Canada.

Hmoob zaj dabneeg keebkwm tau qhia tseeb tias Hmoob yog ib tsa neeg tawv muaj peev xwm, nyiaj ntxeem thiab mob siab tiv thaiv lawv tej zej zog thiab lawv haiv neeg yam kawg siab. Hmoob yog ib tsa neeg uas pauv yoojyim mus rau lub neej twljij vameej, Hmoob ceev khaws lawv li puav pheej kab lig kev cai ruaj khov thiab lawv mob siab rov txhim kho lawv kuj cuab mus rau duos loj hlob haum xeeb tawg paj txi txiv nyob thoob plaws rau daim av luaj pua.

Left image: Nchaiv Vaj Yaj and his late father Qhau Nruas Yaj in the mountains of Xam Neua, Laos, 1968.

Photograph courtesy of Sarah Thao.

Nom Vaj Thoj (Xao Thaow)

I was born in Laos, in the middle of the CIA's 'Secret War.' Others call it the Vietnam War, but for the Hmong, war has always been part of our story. We are a people who have been running for centuries – first from the Han Chinese, then from the French during World War II, and later from the chaos of Vietnam. Survival became part of who we are.

2025 marks 50 years since the Hmong community arrived in Australia. We came as refugees, fleeing Laos after the war because anyone suspected of helping the Americans risked death. Children as young as 10 were sent to fight, and for every American killed in Vietnam, 10 Hmong people lost their lives. I still remember those nights in the jungle, moving from place to place as the fighting crept closer. One night, my father cut young saplings to build a small shelter, while my mother lit a tiny fire just long enough to heat some food before quickly putting it out – a fire could give us away in the darkness. We were lucky my father had a piece of plastic to shield us from the rain. Many others huddled under banana leaves, shivering and wet. I was 7 when we left our village for the last time. I stood with my father, crying as we looked out at the empty homes, terrified by rumours that every male 'with a testicle the size of a pea' would be killed.

Thousands of us fled to Thailand, crammed into refugee camps before being sent to new countries. I ended up in Tasmania, joining my brother. I still remember stepping off the plane in Hobart, the icy air cutting through my thin clothes like a knife. My parents never fully adjusted. My father, once a respected leader, became a silent man, haunted by memories of war. Fishing was his only escape. Yet he worked tirelessly, giving us the chance to build a better life.

Today, the Hmong have come far – from jungle farmers to thriving communities in Australia. Watching our young people become doctors, teachers, and professionals fills me with hope. My dream is that we will build on this success and create a shared vision for the next 50 years.

Kuv yug nyob tebchaw Los Tsuas, nyob rau lub sij hawm tsov rog Nyablaj Liab ntawm CIA "Secret War". Kev tsov rog yog ib feem ntawm peb Hmoob lub neej. Peb yog ib haiv neeg uas yeej khiav tsov khiav rog los tau ntau pua xyoo - thaum pib yog khiav Suav Han, dhau los yog rog Fabkis hauv tsov rog Ntjaj Teb Zaum Ob, thiab tom qab ntawv yog kev kub ntxhov ntawm Tsov Rog Nyablaj. Txoj kev khiav kom muaj sia nyob yog ib feem ntawm peb Hmoob.

Xyoo 2025 no xam tau no yog 50 xyoo uas peb Hmoob tau tuaj poob rau teb chaw Australia. Peb los ua neeg tawg rog, khiav tawm tebchaws Los Tsuas tom qab tsov rog Nyablaj, vim yog leej twg pab Amelikas ces yuav raug tua. Menyuam Hmoob hnub nyoog li kaum xyoo tau raug xa mus ua tub rog, yog muab piv ces Amelikas tuag ib tug tub rog nram Nyablaj qab teb, Hmoob tuag kaum leej. Kuv tseem nco txhua hmo tsau ntuj es peb khiav rog rau ub rau no vim lawv sib tua tuaj ze zuj zus rau ntawm peb. Muaj ib hmos, kuv txiv tau txiav ntoos los ua ib lub tsev pheb suab roos peb, kuv niam rauv tau ib lub cub tawg rau peb ua zaub mov noj. Ua noj tag kiag xwb ces rov muab lub cub tawg tuav tsuag tsuag tsam Nyablaj ho pom peb. Peb muaj hmoov heev; kuv txiv nqa tau ib daim ntaub yas los vov peb thaum ntuj los nag xauv npos. Muaj coob leej ces lawv sib khoov ua ke rau hauv qab nploov tsawb, tshee na thiab ntub nag thawm tag. Kuv muaj xya xyoo thaum peb tau khiav tawm hauv peb lub zos zaum kawg. Kuv sawv nrog kuv txiv, wb quaj thiab ntsia peb lub zos uas khoob vaj khoob vug, neeg khiav tag lawm. Peb ntshai heev vim hnub neeg cav tias txhua txhua tus txiv neej hmoov "noob qes luaj taum daj" yuav raug Nyablaj tua kom tag.

Txhiab leej hmoov khiav tuaj nyob rau Thaibteb, peb tau mus nyob nphoo pes ntxaws rau hauv cov yeej thoj nam ua ntej peb tuaj mus txawj teb chaws. Kuv tau tuaj nrog kuv tus tij laug nyob hauv Tasmania. Kuv tseem nco thaum peb tawm hauv lub dav hlau los nyob hauv Hobart, cov cua txias zias hlais tshab plaws kuv tej ris tsho zoo li rab riam suam xwb. Kuv niam thiab kuv txiv nkawv yeej hloov tsis tau hlo li. Kuv txiv yog ib tug thawj coj nyob ntuj qub qab, tabsim no nws nyob ntsiag tos lawm xwb, vim yog ntshai tej qub kev tsov kev rog. Nws mus nuv ntses yog ib txoj kev uas nws khiav dim txoj kev ntshai no. Txawm li ntawv los nws rau siab ntso khwv thiab muab caij rau peb los kom peb thiab tsim kho kom peb lub neej tshiab kom zoo dua qub.

Niaj hnub no, peb Hmoob mus tau deb heev lawm – tuaj ntawm lub neej ua liaj ua teb nyob saum roob los ua lub neej vammeej rau hauv Australia. Saib peb cov tub ntxhais hluas kawm tiav kws kho mob, kws qhia ntawv, thiab cov uas tshaj lij tshaj ua rau kuv muaj kev cia siab. Kuv txoj kev npau suav yog kom peb muab qhov peb ua tau no los ua qhov tiag tawv rau peb ua kom peb lub neej vammeej loj zuj zus mus thiab tsim kom peb muaj ib lub zeem muag mus rau tsib caug xyoo rau yav tom ntej.





Image: Xao Thaow (pictured far left) and his family in Laos, 1975. This photo was taken a few months before escaping to Thailand. Photograph courtesy of Nao Vam Thaow.



Hmong story cloths

Hmong story cloths are a vibrant and meaningful form of visual storytelling that emerged from the experiences of displacement and resilience among the Hmong people. These cloths are typically hand-stitched to depict scenes from Hmong history, folklore, daily life, and the journeys of migration – especially those following the Vietnam War.

Traditionally, Hmong people are known for their intricate embroidery and textile work. However, the story cloth as a distinct form was developed in refugee camps and later newly settled communities. Many Hmong women began stitching scenes from their lives and used quilting to document their lived experiences and to process changes. They depicted scenes of village life, escape from conflict, and resettlement. These cloths often feature figures, landscapes, and symbolic motifs stitched into the fabric, along with the embroidery techniques that are applied to Hmong clothing.

These cloths became a powerful way to pass down stories across generations. The Hmong people have long relied on oral tradition and visual symbolism to preserve their culture, and the story cloths are a prevalent example of this.

Hmoob paj ntaub dabneeg

Hmoob tej pam paj ntaub dabneeg yog ib yam tawg paj paug ci ntsa iab uas yog xaws duab qhia txog Hmoob tej keebkwm dabneeg uas nyob tsis muaj chaw thiab tsis ruaj khov ntawm haiv neeg Hmoob. Feem ntau tej pam paj ntaub no yog xuas tes xaws los plov txog tej xwm txheej ntawm Hmoob keebkwm, dabneeg, kev ua neej txhua hnub, thiab txoj kev tsiv teb tsaws chaw—tshwj xeeb yog ntos txog lub neej tom qab Tsov Rog Nyabljaj.

Paj ntaub yog Hmoob ib yam puav pheej uas tsim ua los ntawm ntaub xov. Li cas los xij, paj ntaub feem ntau yog tau tsim xaws nyob rau hauv cov yeej thoj nam thiab tom qab tau los mus nyob thooj zej koom zos ruaj chaw. Ntau tus poj niam Hmoob tau xaws txog tej xwm txheej ntawm lawv lub neej thiab zwm ceev txog tej yam lawv tau ntsib tau ua los thiab sua nrog rau yam hloov pauv. Lawv plov txog tej xwm txheej hauv zej zog, kev khiav tawm ntawm kev tsis sib haum xeeb, thiab kev mus nyob rau thaj chaw tshiab. Paj ntaub kheev kheev muaj tej yam losyog tej tug neeg tseem ceeb li duab, toj roob hauv pes, thiab cov cim qauv laug xaws rau hauv cov ntaub, raws nraim li tej qauv txuj qauv tsoos uas siv rau cov khaub ncaws Hmoob.

Pam paj ntaub yog ib yam uas ib txheej qhia dhau ib tis yam muaj zog zis tsis tu ncua. Hmoob tej dabneeg keebkwm yog hais qhia los ntawm kev siv qhov ncauj thiab muab zwm xaws ua duab ua cim txog Hmoob teej tug li kab lig kev cai kev ntseeg.



Image: A Hmong story cloth capturing the Hmong people's displacement, resilience and journey to refugee camps in Thailand and resettlement in other countries. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025



Image: A Hmong story cloth capturing the heart of village life and culture – featuring scenes of farming, dancing and traditional ceremonies. Photograph by Vanghousa Anthony Vue, 2025

Tswv Tuam Thoj (Chue Toua Thao)

I began learning the qeej when I was just 10 years old. I understood how deeply important the qeej is to Hmong culture and identity. It's not just an instrument, it's a sacred tradition that connects us to our ancestors, our ceremonies, and our way of life. Learning the qeej requires true passion, patience and dedication. As a master qeej player, it is my duty to pass on the practices to the next generation so that we can continue our tradition and customs.

The qeej carries not only sound but stories and messages woven into each tune, and every melody has meaning. In funeral rites, for example, there is a sacred procession of songs that must be played to guide the soul of the deceased to the realm of the ancestors. There can be up to 10 distinct songs, each with its own purpose and timing. A single tune may need to be repeated 3 times, and the entire ritual can last 3 to 4 hours.

Beyond funerals, the qeej also brings joy. There are songs for celebration, for dancing, for marking happy occasions. Whether in sorrow or in joy, the qeej speaks for the Hmong people – it tells our stories, honours our ancestors, and keeps our culture alive.

When we prepared to move to Australia, fear and uncertainty weighed heavily on us. We didn't know what life would be like, what kind of people we'd meet, whether there were any Hmong families or how we'd survive in a place so unfamiliar. No one told us what to expect. That silence created deep anxiety.

When we arrived in 1988, we realised the warm climate reminded us of home. Though there weren't many Hmong families at the time, we slowly built our own community. That sense of belonging gave us strength. We weren't alone anymore.

There was support and a translator helped us buy food. Step by step, we began to understand the language and settle into life here. Australia's support for migrants and refugees made a world of difference. We were welcomed, guided and given the space to grow. Over time, the fear faded and was replaced by joy, gratitude and pride in how far we'd come.

We didn't just find safety; we found a home. And looking back, I wouldn't choose anywhere else to live.

Kuv pib kawm qeej thaum kuv 10 xyoo. Kuv nkag siab tias qeej tseem ceeb npaum li cas rau Hmoob kev coj noj coj ua thiab Hmoob teej tug. Qeej tsis yog ib yam suab paj nruag xwb, nws yog ib yam kev ntseeg dawb huv uas txuas tau lus nrog peb cov poj koob yawm txwv, siv tau rau peb tej kev nqaum paj nqaum nruas thiab peb txoj kev ua neej. Kev kawm qeej yuav tsum muaj kev nyiam, ua siab ntev thiab mob siab rau. Thaum peem tsheej mus ua ib tug kws qeej lawm kuv yuav tau nthuav kuv tes dej num mus qhia txheej hluas kom peb ceev khaws tau peb li txujci puavpheej thiab kab lig kev cai.

Qeej tsis yog lub suab xwb tabsis nws yog dabneeg thiab cov lus xa xov, txhua lub suab qeej muaj ntsiab lus. Hauv kab kev pam tuag, pivtxwv, nws muaj cov nkauj uas yuav tau tshuab qhia thiab xa tus tuag tus ntsuj plig kom mus cuag tau poj tau yawm. Muaj li ntawm kaum zaj nkauj qeej sib txawv thiab ntev tsis sib thooj. Ib txwm qeej yuav tsum tshuab peb lwm, thiab xam kev tshuab ib zag qeej yuav tau siv caij li ntawm peb txog plaub teev.

Dhau ntawm kev pam tuag, qeej kuj tsim tau kev lom zem kev zoo siab. Muaj cov nkauj qeej rau kev ua koobtsheej, seev cev, kev rag txuj rau sijhawm sov siab. Txawm yog qeej tu siab losyog lom zem sov siab, Hmoob siv qeej hais lus—nws qhia peb cov dabneeg, hwm peb cov poj koob yawm txwv, thiab ceev khaws peb li kev cai dab qhuas tseg.

Thaum peb npaj yuav txav mus rau Australia, peb ntshai thiab hnyav siab heev. Tsis paub tias lub neej yuav zoo li cas, peb yuav ntsib hom neeg twg, txawm tias muaj tsev neeg Hmoob tid, losyog peb yuav ciaj sia tau li cas rau thaj chaws uas peb tsis tau swm. Tsis muaj leej twg qhia peb hlo li. Nws tau ua rau peb nyuaj siab kawg.

Thaum peb tau tuaj txog xyoo 1988, tus huab cua sov tau ua rau peb nco txog peb qub vaj qub tsev. Thaum ntawv tsis tau muaj Hmoob coob, los peb maj mam sib sau los nyob thooj zej koom zos. Tej yam no tau ua rau peb lub zog loj. Peb tsis nyob twm zeej lawm.

Thaum ntawv peb tau txais kev txhawb nqa thiab muaj tus neeg txhais lus pab peb yuav khoom noj. Maj mam pauv ib kauj ruam dhau ib kauj ruam, thaum peb nkag siab cov lus thiab nyob ruaj chaw rau ntawm no. Australia txoj kev txhawb nqa cov neeg tsiv teb tsaws chaw thiab cov neeg tawg rog ua rau lub ntiaj teb no hloov txawv. Lawv tau txais tos peb zoo, lawv tau cob qhia thiab qhib kev rau peb peem kom lub neej loj hlob. Thaum ntawv txoj kev ntshai tau rais mus ua kev sov siab, kev ris txiaj thiab kev txaus siab tias tsim nyog qhov peb tau tuaj deb ua luaj.

Tsis yog peb nrhiav tau kev nyab xeeb xwb; peb tseem nrhiav tau lub vaj lub tsev nyob. Tig saib rov qab, lub tebchaws no zoo tshaj plaws rau kuv lawm.





Image: Tswv Tuam Thoj with the qeej. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025



Qeej – reed pipe bamboo mouth-organ

The qeej (pronounced 'kheng') is a traditional Hmong musical instrument that holds deep cultural and spiritual significance. It is made from a set of bamboo pipes of varying lengths attached to a wooden or metal windchest. Each pipe has a small metal reed inside, and the player blows into the windchest while manipulating the pipes to produce different tones.

The qeej is traditionally played by men, often those who have undergone extensive training to master not only the instrument but also the ritual language and meanings embedded in its melodies. The Hmong language is tonal, meaning that the pitch or tone of a word can change its meaning. This means that the qeej can 'speak' by mimicking these tones, allowing it to communicate messages to those who understand the language. This is unique to the qeej.

Rab qeej yog Hmoob ib yam cuab yeej suab paj nruag qub uas ceev khaws Hmoob kab lig kev cai thiab tseem ceeb rau sab ntsuj plig. Nws ua los ntawm muab ntau tus kav xyoob los txua dhos rau lub taub qeeg ntoo. Txhua tus kav xyoob (ntiv qeej) yuav muaj ib tug nplaim tooj nyob rau hauv. Tus txiv qeej yuav tshuab cua raws lub ncauj qeeg raws lub taub qeeg mus rau cov nplaim cov ntiv ua rau muaj suab nrov sib txawv tuaj.

Qeej ib txwm yog txiv neej tshuab, kheev yog xyaum kawm xyaum cob qhia tiag tiag mas thiaj peem tsheej tau ua ib tug tub txawj qeeg thiab nws tseem yuav tau to taub txog fab lus kev cai dab qhuas thiab cov ntsiab lus qeej ntawm cov suab qeeg. Lus Hmoob yog ib hom lus muaj suab siab suab qis sib sib thooj ntawm ib lo lus uas tuaj yeem hloov tau lub ntsiab lus tsis sib xws. Lub suab qeej los kuj hloov "tshuab hais" raws nraim li cov lus uas yuav tsum yog cov neeg txawj qeeg thiaj nkag siab.



Image: Tswv Tuam Thoj playing the qeej. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025

Zag Vaj (Wendy Vang)

The baby carriers are special to Hmong people because when we have our weddings, the baby carrier is gifted to the daughter so she can use it while she's cooking or farming. Hmong baby carriers help you feel connected to your baby but still have your hands free to be busy.

To feel connected to my heritage and feel at home in Logan, I go to TAFE to learn English. There I've met so many people from all different ethnicities, and they all share their stories of coming to Australia. The Hmong community is quite large here, so family and friends have helped me feel like I belong here.

Kev tshwj xeeb ntawm Hmoob cov nyias hauv rooj tshoob, daim nyias yog ib yam phaj tshab khoom plig phij cuam rau tus ntxhais tau koj mus siv ev menyuam rau lub sijhawm ua noj ua haus losyog ua teb. Daim nyias no yuav siv ev zawm tus menyuam nrog yus lub cev xwv thiab siv tau ob txhais tes mus ua qav ua num.

Kuv mus kawm ntawv tim TAFE nyob hauv Logan, kuv tau ntsib ntau hom neeg, thiab lawv tau qhia txog lawv tej dabneeg uas lawv tuaj rau tebchaws Australia. Tej yam no ua rau kuv xav tias kuv tseem tuav kuv lub npe Hmoob rau ntawm no. Tsevneeg Hmoob los kuj coob kawg nyob rau Logan, tsis yog yus ib leeg xwb.

Kab Vaj (Karen Vang, Wendy's daughter)

I still use the baby carrier that was given to me by my mum, that she used with me as a baby. I find it much more comfortable than the modern baby carriers, I feel so much more secure. Mum was telling me a while ago how important carriers were during the war. They had to strap their children to themselves and run, knowing their child would be secure while crossing water or trying to reach safety.

I was born in Australia, I'm fluent in Hmong from growing up speaking to my mum. I went to school here not knowing any English, not even knowing how to write my name. That was something I had to learn here even though I was born here. Today, we still follow the Hmong traditions. Anything I don't know and want to learn about my heritage I ask my mum, and if she doesn't know, she'll ask her mum. If there's something we don't know, we question and we ask.

Kuv tseem siv daim nyias kuv niam tau muab rau kuv, uas yog daim kuv niam tau siv ev kuv thaum me. Kuv pom tias nws tseem zoo siv tshaj cov nyias tiam tshiab nim no, nws yooj yim siv thiab ruaj dua. Kuv niam tau hais rau kuv tsis ntev los tias daim nyias tseem ceeb heev rau lub caij khiav tsov khiav rog vim nws khi ruaj khi khov txawm yus yuav khiav npaum cas los menyuam tsis poob thiab nws zoo rau yus ev menyuam mus hla dej losyog khiav mus rau thaj chaw tsis phom sij.

Kuv tau yug nyob rau tebchaws Australia, kuv hais tau lus Hmoob npliag vim kuv yeej ib txwm hais lus Hmoob rau kuv niam. Thaum kuv tau mus kawm ntawv kuv tsis paub hais lus Askiv hlo li, twb sau tsis tau kuv lub npe. Ntawv yog ib yam uas kuv yuav tsum tau kawm sau txawm yog tias kuv tau yug rau tebchaws no. Peb tseem ua raws li Hmoob kev koj noj koj ua, yam twg kuv tsis paub kuv tau nug kuv niam txog Hmoog li kev ntseeg, yog kuv niam tsis paub ces nws ho mus nug nws niam. Yog yam twg peb tsis paub ces peb ho mus ntxig nug lwm tus.





Image: Zag Vaj (right) with her daughter Kab Vaj and grandson. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025



Hmong baby carrier

Hmong baby carriers are hand-stitched textiles that are traditionally handmade by Hmong women. These carriers are often passed down through generations. Each stitch and symbol reflect the maker's personal story and regional origin. The choice of symbols, such as spirals or animal figures, also holds deep meaning and may represent protection, fertility or ancestral spirits.

The carriers were often used during journeys and daily travel, especially in traditional village life, to keep their babies comfortable and secure while parents worked in fields or travelled. During times of war or displacement the baby carriers became a vital tool for keeping infants safe during these long and often dangerous journeys.

In these contexts, the baby carrier wasn't just practical – it became a symbol of protection and continuity. Even in times of displacement and upheaval, the act of carrying a child in a lovingly made textile reinforced their identity and community values.

Hmoob daim nyias ev menyuam

Hmoob cov nyias yog muab tes xaws los ntawm poj niam Hmoob. Tej yam no ib txheej tau qhia dhau ib tis los. Txhua koob xaws thiab cov cim qauv laug yog qhia txog tus kheej li dabneeg thiab keebkwm ib cheeb tsam. Cov cim paj ntaub qauv laug, li cov qauv qwj kauv kauv losyog duab tsiaj, puav leej muaj ntsiab lus tob uas yog tiv thaiv yam phem yam tsis zoo, ua kom tu tub tu kiv huaj vam losyog poj koob yawm txwv pov hwm.

Cov nyias yog siv ev menyuam rau lub caij mus kev deb lossis thaum tawm rooj, nyob rau hauv zos, thaum ua liaj ua teb. Nyias yog ib yam cuab yeej muaj nqis uas siv rau lub caij khiav tsov rog losyog thaum muaj kev phomsij.

Cov ntsiab lus tseeb, daim nyias tsis yog siv ris menyuam xwb–nws yog ib yam cim tiv thaiv thiab siv mus ntev ntev. Tsis hais thaum rhais chaw tshiab thiab khiav rog, nyias yog siv ris menyuam thiab yog ib yam qauv laug ua khaws kujcuab neeg li puav pheej keebkwm muaj nqis cia.



Image: Hmong baby carrier in use. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025

Maiv Xis Ham (Destinie Hang)

I feel very beautiful when I wear Hmong clothing. The sound the silver makes when I move, it sounds very magical. When you dance all together, the silver adds to the dance and to the music. Dance is one of the main reasons we wear Hmong clothing like this. We also have a big event at the end of every year which is the Hmong New Year. It's a big get-together and we all wear Hmong clothing to take photos and mark the event. The skirt is handstitched, and on this skirt, it features the elephant print which is a Hmong symbol which symbolises love and unity.

Growing up we always wore Hmong clothing. I feel like this outfit helps to express my identity and especially because growing up Hmong people didn't have a land to call our own so when we wear Hmong clothing we can say this belongs to Hmong. When I was younger you didn't really understand the significance of Hmong clothing. I think that young children feel like it's such a hassle to wear Hmong clothing because it's heavy, especially in the heat. I think as you grow up you start to embrace it more.

One time we dressed up in Hmong clothing to take photos at the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers. I remember this day, there were so many people coming up to us and asking us about our clothes, asking if we were performing and taking photos of us. They had probably just never seen these outfits before and were interested in who we were.

It's very important to embrace our culture, having grown up in a Western country it's been hard as our language and culture has been washed out, we're losing it. It's very hard to come back to your culture, so it's important to always reflect on who you are, and understand where you came from and you shouldn't disregard it. Logan is very multicultural, so it's not hard to feel accepted here. I always see Hmong people and I feel connected by those of us that are here.

Thaum hnav tau tsoos tsho Hmoob mas zoo li kuv zoo nkauj heev. Thaum kuv mus kev ua rau cov suab nyiaj nrov zig ziaj mas cuag li nws yog yees siv. Thaum koj seev cev ua ke, cov suab nyiaj nrhov phim rau kev seev cev thiab lub suab paj nruag. Kev seev cev yog ib qho tseem ceeb rau kev hnav khaub ncaws Hmoob zoo li no, peb lub nqaum toj tsiab peb caug yog ib lub loj nyob rau txhua xyoo, sawv daws hnav ris tsho Hmoob tuaj koom ua ke, tuaj yees duab thiab tsav lub paj tsiab peb caug. Daim tiab yog xuas tes xaws, tus ntshw ntawm daim tiab yog ib lub cim kev hlub thiab kev koom siab ua ib pawg.

Loj hlob peb ib txwm hnav khaub ncaws Hmoob. Txawm tias Hmoob tsis muaj daim av nyob los cev ris tsho qhia tuskheej tias yus yog Hmoob. Thaum kuv tseem yau yus yeej tsis nkag siab txog kev tseem ceeb ntawm khaub ncaws Hmoob, kuv xav tias hnav tsoos tsho Hmoob yog ib qho meem txom vim nws hnyav thiab sov heev. Thaum loj hlob tuaj kuv thiaj mam pib nyiam nws zuj zus.

Muaj ib zaug peb hnav khaub ncaws Hmoob mus yees duab nyob rau Toowoomba lub nqaum toj paj tawg. Kuv nco ntsoov hnuv ntawv muaj coob leej los nug peb txog peb cov khaub ncaws, nug seb puas yog peb ua yeeb yam es yuav pab yees peb duab. Tej zaum lawv tsis tau pom peb cov khaub ncaws dua thiab lawv xav paub tias peb yog leej twg.

Nws yog ib qho tseem ceeb heev rau kev nyiam peb li teej tug tsoos tsho, loj hlob rau sab tebchaws Hnubpoob nws yog ib qho nyuaj uas peb tej lus thiab teej tug li puav pheej tau raug ntxuav ploj tag. Nws yog ib yam puav pheej uas muab rov qab los nyuaj heev. Nco ntsoov tias koj yog leej twg thiab yuav tsum tsis txhob hnob qab koj li teej tug puav pheej. Muaj ntau haiv neeg nyob rau lub nroog Logan, yog li nws tsis yog ib qho nyuaj txog kev lees txais peb rau ntawm no. kuv kheev kheev pom peb cov Hmoob thiab kuv xav tias peb muaj kev sib raug zoo nrog luag lwm pab lwm pawg nyob ntawm no.





Image: Maiv Xis Ham wearing traditional Hmong clothing. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025



Traditional Hmong clothing

Traditional Hmong clothing is a vibrant expression of Hmong culture. Women's clothing typically includes pleated skirts, sashes, aprons and embroidered jackets, completed with silver jewellery especially during celebrations as a symbol of prosperity and protection.

Colours are very important in Hmong traditional clothing and each colour has its own meaning. As an example, deep blue is associated with nature, depth and spiritual grounding, whereas green and yellow are symbolic of growth and connection to the land.

Hmong clothing has evolved significantly over time. As Hmong communities migrated, their clothing adapted to new environments and styles. In recent decades Hmong fashion has embraced modern influences, blending traditional techniques with contemporary styles, as seen in this dress. Younger generations have reimagined traditional dress for performances and everyday wear.

Tsoos tsho Hmoob

Tsoos tsho Hmoob yog Hmoob teej tug puav pheej. Poj niam Hmoob li tsoos tsho nqi sua txog tiab tais nre, siv sia, cov sev thiab cov tsho loj paj ntaub, ua tiav hlo nrog rau dai nyiaj npib nyiaj hob uas yog coj los hnav rau lub caij nqaum paj nqaum nruas yog ib yam qauv cim txog kev muaj yeej thiab kev tiv thaiv yam phem yam tsis zoo.

Cov tsos kob tseem ceeb heev rau Hmoob tsoos tsho, txhua hom kob nyias muaj nyias ntsiab lus. Piv txwv, kob xiav doog yog nqi sua txog tsiaj txhu nroj tsuag toj roob hauv pes, lub ntuj hiav txwv thiab sab ntsuj plig kom nyob nyab xeeb, kob ntsuab thiab daj yog cov cim loj hlob tawg paj txi txiv thiab daim av luaj pua.

Hmoob tej tsoos tsho tau hloov pauv zuj zus. Raws li Hmoob tau tsiv teb tsaws chaw, lawv tej tsoos tej qauv tau hloov mus raws li thaj chaw tshiab lawv mus nyob. Ntau kaum xyoo los no Hmoob tej tsoos tau hloov raws lub neej vammeej tiam tshiab, muaj ntau hom qauv tau ua tawm los ntawm kev muab tshuab luam tshuab ntos li pom no. Tej tub ntxhais yuav tau rov xav txog kev hnav Hmoob tej tsoos qub los ua yeeb yam thiab kev hnav khaub ncaws txhua hnub.



Image: Close up of Hmong traditional dress. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025

Txiab Neeb Vwj (Chia Neng Vue)

I arrived in Australia in the early 1990s as a 24-year-old refugee, not knowing a word of English and carrying nothing but hope. My father had died in the war, my mother and siblings had fled to America, and I came here with my wife, searching for a new beginning.

Back in Laos, before the Vietnam War, my parents were farmers. I remember the scent of soil, the sound of sickles, and the way my mother cradled vegetables like treasures. That life was disrupted by conflict, and we fled to Thailand. From there, everything became uncertain but those early memories stayed with me.

The transition to Australia was tough. We didn't understand the language or the culture. Yet, even in the uncertainty, there were opportunities even for people like us with little education. When we moved to the City of Logan, the warm weather reminded us of home. I left my job so my wife and I could work together. That's when we started farming.

We started small, growing herbs and vegetables with simple tools and a lot of determination. Every harvest taught us something new. Every setback tested our resilience. Slowly, our farm grew and so did our confidence.

Farming connects us to our Hmong identity. It's not just work, it's a way of life. Across the world, Hmong people share customs and traditions that keep us united. That connection gives us strength and reminds us that we're never truly alone.

There's a quiet joy in watching seeds grow into something nourishing. When customers at the market tell us how fresh our produce is, it fills us with pride. It reminds us how far we've come. My message to the younger Hmong generation in Australia is to study hard. Education opens doors we never had. Carry our culture with you but move forward to build a better life.

I'm forever grateful to my brother-in-law who sponsored us, and to Australia for giving us a second chance. Here, we found peace, purpose and a place to call home.

Kuv tuaj txog Australia ntawm hauv xyoo 1990 li ib tug neeg tawg rog 24 xyoos, tsis paub ib lo lus Askiv thiab nqa tsis tau ib yam dabtsi tsuas yog muaj kev cia siab xwb. Kuv txiv tau tuag rau hauv tshav rog, kuv niam thiab cov kwv tij nkauj muam tau mus rau Asmeskas, thiab kuv tau tuaj nrog kuv poj niam, tuaj nrhiav kev pib dua tshiab.

Nyob rau hauv Nplog, ua ntej tsov rog Nyablaj, kuv niam kuv txiv yog neeg ua liaj ua teb. Kuv tseem nco tus ntshiab tsw ntawm cov av, lub suab siv liag hlais npej, thiab kuv niam dob zaub hwm zaub zoo li yog nyiaj kub yam muaj nqis. Lub neej ntawv tau muaj kev sib cov nyom yog li peb thiaj tau khiav mus rau Thaibteb. Lub caij ntawv txhua yam tsis muaj kev ruaj khov tabsis cov kev cim nco tseem nyob nrog nraim kuv.

Kev mus plhis tshiab rau Australia yog yam nyuaj. Peb tsis nkag siab cov lus lossis kab lig kev cai. Li cas los xij, txawm lub neej tid paub tsis tseeb, tej zaum kuj muaj hwj tsam rau cov neeg muaj kev kawm tsawg thiab. Thaum peb tau tsiv mus rau Logan, tus huab cua sov rov ua rau peb nco qub zej qub zos. Kuv tau tawm hauj lwm los nrog poj niam ua ua ke. Ntawv yog wb tau pib ua teb.

Wb tau pib me me, cog txuj lom thiab zaub nrog cov cuab yeej ua teb yooj yim uas yuav tau siv tag nrho lub zog pab. Txhua cim qoob sau tau qhia wb qee yam tshiab. Txhua hom kev nqis tes sim tau ua rau wb rov muaj kev tawm tsam mus rau duas ruaj khov. Maj mam, txog rau thaum wb tej txhiam laj txhiam xws hlob tuaj ces wb mam muaj kev kaj siab.

Kev ua teb nqi sua txog peb haiv neeg Hmoob ntiag tug. Nws tsis yog hauj lawm xwb, nws yog txoj kev khwv ntawm lub neej. Thoob plaws qab ntuj, haiv neeg Hmoob nthuav txog Hmoob puav pheej kev coj noj coj ua thiab teej tug kom Hmoob muaj noj muaj haus ua tau ib pab ib pawg. Tej kev nqi sua sib khi no ua rau peb lub zog loj thiab qhia tau tias tsis yog peb ib leeg xwb.

Yog ib yam kev xyiv fab kaj siab thaum pom tej qoob loo loj hlob los mus ua zaub noj. Thaum cov neeg yuav zaub tim khw muag zaub qhia wb tias cov zaub wb ua ntawv tshiab heev, nws ua rau wb tsaus siab hlo. Nws qhia wb tias wb mus deb npaum li cas. Kuv xav hais rau tsoom tub ntshais hluas kom rau rau siab kawm ntawv. Kev kawm qhib rooj lug yog ib yam uas yav tag los peb tsis muaj. Ceev khaws Hmoob li teej tug puav pheej kab lig kev cai thiab txhim kho lub neej kom loj hlob dua qub lawm yav tom ntej.

Kuv ua tsaug rau kuv tus yawm yij (dab laug) uas nws tau ua tswv cuab tos peb, thiab muab zim txwv rau peb tuaj ua neej zaum ob rau Australia. Ntawm no peb tau txais kev thaj yeeb nyab xeeb, muaj txoj kev taug thiab muaj thaj chaw hu ua lub tsev.





Image: Txiab Neeb Vwj and his wife Zag Thoj at their farm in the City of Logan. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025



Lub kawm – woven basket

The kawm is a traditional Hmong woven basket typically made from bamboo or rattan. It is often worn like a backpack and was used to carry everything from crops and firewood to household goods. The kawm is both a practical tool shaped by generations of craftsmanship and a symbol of everyday life in mountainous regions. Traditionally, men were the primary weavers of kawm baskets, a unique aspect of Hmong textile arts which are often led by women.

Beyond their practical uses, kawm baskets are symbols of self-sufficiency and connection to the land. They represent the everyday strength of Hmong families.

Hmoob lub kawm yog ib lub pob tawb uas muab xyob losyog kav theej hiab. Nws yog hom ev rau nraum nraub qaum thiab siv ris qoob loo thiab taws los rau hauv vaj hauv tsev. Kawm yog ib yam cuab yeej uas xyaum hiab los tau ntau tiam neeg thiab nws yog siv rau lub neej nyob rau yav hauj sab. Kawm yog Hmoob li teej tug, kheev yog txiv neej hiab, feem ntau ntawm Hmoob tej cuab yeej paj ntaub tw siv mas ho yog poj niam leg.

Kawm yog tsim los siv rau yus tus kheej thiab lawv muaj feem sib khi nrog daim av Hmoob nyob. Lawv sawv cev lub zog ruaj khov txhua hnuv ntawm tsevneeg Hmoob.



Image: Hmong children carrying the kawm on their backs. Photograph by Vanghou Anthony Vue, 2025

Siv Yis Ham (Toua Hang)

My family arrived in Melbourne in 1989, alongside many other Hmong families. It felt familiar, just like living adjacent in the Thai refugee camps we came from, where we shared stories, traditions, and supported each other.

Watching my parents work long hours in a new country, with little English and few resources, I witnessed what true resilience looked like. Their perseverance taught me that success isn't just about money – it's about independence, survival, and creating something for the next generation. This inspired me to seek a passion I loved, one where I could work for myself and eventually lead and uplift others too.

In 2011, I completed my Painting & Decorating apprenticeship. Owning a business in Australia has been both challenging and rewarding. It has required hard work, resilience and constant learning but it has also opened up opportunities I never imagined. Running my own business has given me the freedom to shape my future, take pride in my work and contribute to the community in a meaningful way. It's about showing that our cultural identity isn't something we have to hide or explain but something we can proudly lead with in every space we enter.

One story that has stayed with me is learning that my late father was recruited as a child soldier in the 'Secret War' in Laos at just 13 years old. Orphaned and so young, he entered a life of conflict that, for many families, became heartbreakingly normal. His story opened my eyes to the reality that so many of our parents were silent heroes – carrying unspoken pain and unimaginable strength. Now that I'm older, I recognise the deep resilience, love, and sacrifice that lives within every parent's journey. They didn't have an easy path – but they walked it anyway, so that we could stand where we are today.

Today, as a proud Hmong-Australian business owner, I'm honoured to employ both young and mature-aged Hmong apprentices. Every day, we witness their dedication, talent, and strong work ethic – qualities that have been passed down through generations in our community. Our hope is that future generations continue to carry this legacy forward – becoming skilled tradespeople, business owners, and leaders who contribute with pride to an inclusive, vibrant and culturally rich Australia.

Kuv tsev neeg tau tuaj txog Melbourne xyoo 1989, nrog rau ntau tsev neeg Hmoob. Kev peb tau tuaj nyob sib npuab muaj ntsis zoo li thaum ub peb tau nyob rau cov yeej thoj nam, uas peb tau sib qhia txog peb tej dabneeg, peb tej kev ntseeg kev coj noj coj ua, thiab kev ib leeg txhawb ib tug.

Saib kuv niam kuv txiv ua hauj lwm ntev sij hawm nyob rau lub tebchaws tshiab, nrog rau kev paub lus Askiv me ntsis thiab qee yam kev pab, kuv pom qhov tseeb txog kev ruaj khov tias zoo li cas. Nkawv txoj kev tom siab tau qhia kuv tias yam ua tau muaj yeej tsis yog nyiaj txiaj xwb—nws yog kev ywj pheej, kev muaj sia nyob, thiab qee yam uas tsim tseg rau tej xeeb ntxwv tom ntej. Qhov no tau tshoov kuv lub siab mus nrhiav yam uas kuv xav ua, ib qho uas tuaj yeem ua hauj lwm rau tuskheej thiab thaum kawg coj thiab pab tau lwm tus.

Hauv xyoo 2011, kuv tau kawm tiav kuv qhov laj txheej ke kawm ke Pleev Kob & Teeb Kho Zoo Nkauj. Yus ua yus lag luam nyob rau Australia yog ib yam nyuaj uas yuav tau siv zog tabsis nws ua rau yus muaj kev zoo siab. Yuav tau ua hauj lwm hnyav, ruaj khov thiab ke ua ke kawm tas li tabsis yuav qhib tau qee yam uas yus xav tsis txog. Yus ua yus lag luam yog ib qho muaj kev ywj pheej rau yus txhim kho lub neej pem suab, txaus siab rau yus txoj hauj lwm thiab pab tau yus kuj cuab neeg yam muaj txiaj ntsig. Yam yus ua tau zoo ntawv qhia tias yus mus qhov twg los tsis ntshai tias yus yog Hmoob.

Ib zaj dabneeg tseem nyob nrog kuv yog kuv txiv uas tau tag sim neej tau raug lim xaiv mus ua ib tug menyuam tub peeb zeej rau ntu Tsov Rog Zais (Secret War) hauv Nplog thaum nws muaj 13 xyoos. Nws yog ib tug menyuam ntsuag thiab hluas heev, nws nkag mus rau hauv kev sib ntaus sib tua, muaj ntau tsev neeg, tau txais txoj kev quaj ntsuag tu siab. Nws zaj dabneeg tau qhib kuv lub qhov muag pom tseeb tias muaj ntau leej niam thiab txiv yog cov cawm seej uas tsis muaj tus paub—ev rawv lub mob qhia tsis tau leej twg thiab nyob qaug zog luj luas. Ziaq no kuv laus zus, mam paub txog kev ruaj khov, kev hlub thiab yam uas muab txoj sia pua kev taug rau txhua leej niam thiab txiv. Lawv txoj hau kev tsis yooj yim—tabsis lawv kuj peem dhau, yog li hnuv no thiaj muaj peb sawv ntawm no.

Niaj hnuv no, zoo siab tau ua ib tug tswv lag luam Hmoob-Australian, kuv muaj hwm tsam tau ntiav cov hluas thiab cov nrab neej los kawm thiab ua num ua ke nrog. Txhua hnuv peb pom lawv txoj kev tom siab, txoj kev tshaj lij thiab siv zog ua hauj lwm—kev ua hauj lwm zoo tau txais los ntawm ib txheej cev dhau ib tis hauv tsev neeg Hmoob. Peb cia siab tias tiam tshiab yuav ceev khaws txoj kev zoo no mus tsis kawg—rais los ua neeg paub khiav lag luam, tswv lag luam, cov thawj coj sib nkag tau ua ke, thiab nyob tau kaj siab lug hauv tebchaws Australia uas muaj ntau pab pawg neeg zwm loos ua ke.





Image: Siv Yis Ham (pictured second from the left) with his mum and siblings at the Melbourne Hmong New Year, 1993. Courtesy of Siv Yis Ham.



Image: Siv Yis Ham with his family. Photograph courtesy of Siv Yis Ham.



Hmong shaman gong

The Hmong shaman gong, known as *lub nruas*, is a sacred instrument used in traditional spiritual practices by Hmong shamans. This gong is used as a tool to summon spirits and guide the shaman's journey during healing ceremonies. The sound of the gong is believed to pierce through the physical and spiritual worlds, helping the shaman navigate between realms. In Hmong culture, this gong is deeply respected. It is not used casually, but only by those trained in spiritual practice. The gong's role in ceremonies reflects the Hmong worldview, in which the physical and spiritual are closely intertwined.

The gong is used rhythmically, often in combination with chanting or drumming, to maintain the shaman's connection to the spirit world. Once the healing process is complete – whether it involves retrieving a lost soul, or restoring harmony – the gong is used again to seal the ritual and return the shaman to the physical world. Its use reflects the deep spiritual and cultural significance of sound in Hmong healing traditions, where wellness is seen as a holistic balance between body, spirit, and community.

Lub nruas

Hmoob *lub nruas* neeb, yog ib yam cuab yeej uas tus txiv neeb tau coj los siv rau thaum ua neeb ua yaig. *Lub nruas* yog siv ntaus txhib cov qhua neeb (hu cov ntsuj plig) thiab coj tus txiv neeb kev rau thaum ua neeb. Ntseeg tias *lub suab nruas* yuav tho tshab tau *lub cev ntaj ntsug* thiab *lub ntuj sab ntsuj plig*, pab tus txiv neeb rau sab nruab yeeb. *Lub nruas* yog ib yam Hmoob hwm heev nyob rau Hmoob kev cai dab qhuas, tsis lam tau lam siv *lub nruas*, yuav tsum yog siv los ntawm cov txiv neeb txiv yaig xwb. *Lub nruas* tseem ceeb heev rau Hmoob kev cai dab qhuas Hmoob kev ntseeg, nws cuam tshuam txog *lub cev ntaj ntsug* thiab sab ntsuj plig.

Siv *lub nruas* rau thaum hu nkauj neeb, kheev yog siv ua ke rau thaum txhib qhua losyog koos ntsuj, npaj txhawm kom tus txiv neeb txuas tau lus nrog rau sab ntsuj plig. Thaum ua neeb saib tiav lawm—txawm yog mus coj tus ntsuj plig uas tau ploj lawm rov qab los, losyog kho tus ntsuj plig kom zoo—thaum no rov siv *lub nruas* los ntaus cais dab kom tus ntsuj plig rov los puab duab puab cev. *Lub nruas* tseem ceeb rau sab ntsuj plig thiab kev kho mob kho nkeeg hauv Hmoob kab lig kev cai, tshwj xeeb yog kev noj qab haus huv ntawm *lub cev ntaj ntsug*, sab ntsuj plig thiab kuj cuab neeg.



Image: The Hmong shaman gong is a ritual instrument used by Hmong shamans and their assistants. Photograph by Vanghoua Anthony Vue, 2025



Image: Women embroidering in Chiang Kam refugee camp. Photo courtesy of Hmong Culture Brisbane, 2025.



Image: The arrival of Hmong families to Australia, 1982. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thao, 2025.



Image: Hmong girls performing a traditional dance at the 2024–2025 Hmong New Year celebration in Logan, December 2024.

The Living Museum of Logan would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Sarah Thao, Hmong Culture Brisbane and the Hmong community of Logan for sharing their stories and objects to make this exhibition possible.

Exhibition title and motifs graphic design: Vanghoua Anthony Vue and Margaret Xiong

Photography: Vanghoua Anthony Vue

Hmong translation: Vue Vang

Curator: Alice Hinton in collaboration with Sarah Thao

Lub Tsev Ceev Qub Txeeg Qub Tes Tsis Tu Ncuat ntawm Logan ua tsaug ntau rau Sarah Thoj, Hmong Culture Brisbane thiab Hmong Community uas tau nthuav qhia lawv tej dabneeg thiab tej tsoos cuab yeej ua rau lub koobtsheej loj hlob mus tau.

Ua Duab Qhia Dabneeg: Vanghoua Anthony Vwj thiab Margaret Xyooj

Yees Duab: Vanghoua Anthony Vwj

Txhais Lus Hmoob: Tswv Cuab Hmong Culture Brisbane

Tus Saib Xyuas: Alice Hinton koom nrog Sarah Thoj





Living Museum of Logan
Kingston Butter Factory Cultural Precinct
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Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm and when events and performances are held at the Kingston Butter Factory.

Entry is FREE.

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