**Enemy within**

*“About 43 per cent of the 52,000 people defined as 'aliens' during the war were classed as 'enemy' - mainly Germans, Italians and Japanese.”[[1]](#footnote-1)*

*“In November 1941, just weeks before Japan entered World War II, Japanese nationals were among the ‘Aliens’ travelling around Australia with Wirth’s Circus. In a letter to the Commissioner of Police in Sydney, Captain George Newman, Intelligence Section, Australian Military Forces – Eastern Command, requested that the registration files of all alien members of Wirth’s circus be forwarded ‘through the usual channels’ in order to ‘investigate the history, sympathies, etc of all Alien employees of Wirth’s Circus.’*

*The fate of Wirth’s ‘enemy alien’ employees is unknown but between 1940 and 1945, several thousand supposed enemy aliens were interned all around Australia. Japanese pearl fisherman from Broome together with Australians of Italian and German origin, many of whom had been born in Australia or had lived in Australia for years, were forced to leave their homes and their livelihoods.*

*Entire families were moved into internment camps around the country: Yanco, Hay and Cowra in New South Wales; Loveday and Nangwarry in South Australia; Gaythorne in Queensland; Dhurringile, Murchison and Tatura in Victoria; and Harvey and Northam in Western Australia. In many of the camps they were joined by prisoners of war captured in the Middle East or closer to home in the Pacific. Many Japanese civilians from the Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia) were also interned in Australia.”[[2]](#footnote-2)*



Mr and Mrs Erasmo Riboni and their children   
Eleonora, Feerica and Paolo, at No 3 Camp,   
Tatura Internment Group, Victoria, 24 June 1943

Source: WW2 Australia website

1. Anzac Day. *The enemy within.* Retrieved from <http://www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww2/homefront/enemy.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WW2 Australia. *All in – ‘enemy aliens’.* Retrieved from <http://www.ww2australia.gov.au/allin/aliens.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)