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14 September 2019

Lady Anne Smith
Chairperson
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry
PO BOX 24085, Edinburgh, EH7 9EA

By email to: talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot

Dear Lady Smith,

Please find attached a Report on the *Impacts and outcomes of child migration experienced by Scottish child migrants sent to Australia*.

This Report provides background information relevant to applications submitted to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. A Report was also prepared by Tuart Place for the Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry in 2013.

Each former child migrant in contact with your Inquiry will have an individual account of how they were affected by their time in Scottish institutions and migrating to Australia. However, some impacts of child migration were universal, or were experienced by the great majority of child migrants.

We hope this Report will assist in informing the Inquiry about the broader issues as well as the particular circumstances of Scottish children sent to Australia under the UK Government child migration scheme.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Philippa White
Director, Tuart Place
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Impacts and outcomes of child migration experienced by Scottish child migrants sent to Australia: A Report by Tuart Place

September 2019

Introduction

This Report examines the impacts of unaccompanied child migration from Scotland and other parts of the UK, and the outcomes for former child migrants and their families. Information was gathered from a series of reports and publications, and from individual observations by former child migrants. The first section of the Report outlines the legislative basis for the UK child migration schemes, provides statistical data on Scottish child migrants, and draws from three official reports on child migration published in the 1940s and 50s. These reports provide a context for the policies and practices of child migration and convey the attitudes to child welfare and contemporary professional knowledge at that time.

The second section of the Report describes the treatment of child migrants in Australia and identifies failures in the duty of care exercised by authorities involved in child migration. Specific harms experienced by the great majority of child migrants, such as lack of access to personal information and records, loss of connection to family and local communities, loss of personal and national identity, loss of cultural heritage, and loss of connection to country of origin are discussed. The Report also identifies the more direct forms of abuse and neglect experienced by child migrants in Australian institutions.

The Report concludes with an outline of previous responses and reparations offered to people harmed by the experience of child migration, and a summary of key issues identified in the Report.

Legislative basis for child migration

The legislative basis for child migration was provided by the *Empire Settlement Act 1922 (UK)*, which was reactivated after World War II, when the British Government, in partnership with the Australian Government, entered into agreements with each of the sending agencies. In Scotland, sending agencies such as the Sisters of Nazareth and the Church of Scotland were responsible for the administration of the schemes. These agencies were required to provide information to the UK Secretary of State for his authorisation to migrate children. However, as stated in the Australian Senate's report on child migration, the British Government effectively 'out-sourced' the task of child migration to the charities and religious organisations, noting that: "it appears that in practice [the sending agencies] dealt with all decision-making processes and procedures in relation to the selection of children, consents and migration arrangements".¹

Statistical data

Available data on the number of unaccompanied child migrants sent from the UK to Australia are inconsistent and vary greatly. For example, a 1998 UK Select Committee on Health was told that between 7,000 and 10,000 child migrants were sent to Australia between 1947 and 1967,² while a 2001 Australian Senate Inquiry found that only 3,170 children were sent from the UK to Australia under subsidised child migration schemes during the same time period.³

¹ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001). *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record*, Report on Child Migration, Commonwealth of Australia, August 2001. p.26.

² UK Parliament (1998). *The Welfare of Former British Child Migrants*, House of Commons, 23 July 1998. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmhealth/755/75502.htm>

³ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001). *Op.cit.* p.267.

During the post-WWII period, most UK child migrants to Australia were sent by either the Fairbridge Society or Catholic Church agencies. The main Catholic receiving agencies in Australia were, respectively, the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy, and the Sisters of Nazareth.⁴

The great majority of post-WWII child migrants were placed in West Australian institutions, although between 1950 and 1960 the Church of Scotland sent a total of 83 children (all boys) to a Presbyterian orphanage in Tatura, Victoria.⁵

Data on country of origin are recorded in the Final Report of the Australian Child Migrant Project (2001-2005), in which Project Manager Joan Kerry focussed on 1,109 Catholic children sent from the UK to Australia between 1938 and 1956. The great majority of these children left the UK between 1947 and 1953, with only 115 sent in 1938/39.⁶

Child migration from Scotland

Of the 1,109 child migrants recorded in Joan Kerry's research,⁷ we know that at least 96 came from Scotland, with the great majority of these children being sent from Nazareth Houses. A profile of the sending agencies and their locations in Scotland is provided in the table below.

Institution	Location	No. of children
Nazareth House	Aberdeen	37
Nazareth House	Bonnyrigg	27
Nazareth House	Glasgow	8
Nazareth House	Kilmarnock	4
Good Shepherd Sisters	Collinton, Edinburgh	5
Sending agency not recorded	Greenock	1
Sending agency not recorded	Edinburgh	14
	Total	96

After being selected for migration by local authorities in Scotland, children were sent to Australia via England, typically travelling to London by train. All Scottish child migrants departing for Australia left from the port of Southampton.⁸

Contact with former child migrants from Scotland

A total of 52 of the 96 child migrants sent to Australia from Scotland under Catholic migration schemes have had contact with Tuart Place and/or its forerunner services. Of these 52 clients, 21 are known to have died (between 1999 and 2019).

Only seven of the 52 Scottish former child migrants who have had contact with Tuart Place are women. The youngest Scottish former child migrant known to Tuart Place is 73 years old. Six children (all boys) were sent to Australia before WWII (in 1938 and 39), and only one of these men is still alive, aged 91.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.273.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.267.

⁶ Kerry, J. (2005). *Australian Child Migrant Project: Full Report*. Catholic Child Welfare Council, Caritas-social action, December 2005.

⁷ The sending agency is unknown for 47 of the 1,109 children.

⁸ All UK child migrants left from Southampton; only children bound for Canada departed from ports in Liverpool and Glasgow.

The years of arrival of 49 of the Scottish former child migrants known to Tuart Place are reported in the table below:

Year of arrival	No. of children
1938	1
1939	5
1947	27
1948	2
1949	1
1950	5
1952	4
1953	3
1955	1
Total	49

As this table shows, the majority of child migrants from Scotland known to this agency were sent to Australia in 1947. The following table shows the *Age on arrival in Australia* of these Scottish former child migrants.

Age on arrival in Australia	
age 4	1
age 5	2
age 6	6
age 7	2
age 8	4
age 9	5
age 10	8
age 11	10
age 12	2
age 13	6
age 14	2
age 15	1
Total	49

The above-mentioned data on gender, age and year of arrival in Australia of Scottish child migrants are consistent with the demographic profile of the wider population of children sent to Australia from Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland under child migration schemes.

All of the UK child migrants sent to Australia were subject to the broader social policies, legislation, and apparent motivations for implementing and continuing the practice of sending unaccompanied child migrants from the UK to Australia.

Motivations underpinning child migration policy

The motivation for choices made by governments, religious orders, and local authorities involved in sending children to Australia is the subject of analysis in published reports and other literature, and

there is widespread consensus that the motives were 'mixed'.⁹ It is well recognised that child migration policy was underpinned by a genuine philanthropic desire to rescue children from destitution and neglect and send them to a better life in the Colonies".¹⁰ However, child migration was also seen to be of economic benefit to those responsible for sending children and to the countries receiving them, and to be driven by motives other than the best interests of the child.

The Report of the *Lost Innocents* Senate Inquiry states that:

[D]uring and immediately after World War II there was a concerted effort within Australia to boost immigration to Australia of preferably British migrants, including child migrants. Dr Constantine noted, however, that in the United Kingdom, the studied effects of wartime evacuation and family separation confirmed the more widely publicised view in official and professional circles of the importance of stable child-parent relationships for the psychological well-being of children. These conclusions led to a questioning of the appropriateness of child migration as a child care practice.¹¹

The Curtis, Moss, and Ross Reports

In 1945 the United Kingdom Government appointed the Care of Children Committee (the Curtis Committee) to report on the care of children. The Committee identified the conventional natural family as the unit most conducive to the well-being of children. The emphasis they placed on the psychological and not just the physical needs of children signalled an important shift in professional child care thinking. In its conclusions, the Curtis Committee emphasised that local authorities and voluntary societies caring for children 'deprived of a normal home life' should attempt to replicate the 'natural family' as far as possible in child care practice.

The Committee concluded that the emigration of children in care should remain open for those with 'an unfortunate background' and who 'express a desire for it', with the important caveat that the treatment of children sent overseas should not be less satisfactory than the care which they should receive in the United Kingdom (emphasis not in original).¹²

Two major investigations into the situation of child migrants were conducted by British government officials in the 1950s. These led to the publication of two reports – the Moss Report in 1953 based on John Moss's visit in 1951-52; and the Ross Report in 1956 based on a UK official fact finding mission.

While the Moss Report commented favourably on several Australian institutions, as Dr Stephen Constantine of Lancaster University points out, the necessary reforms that John Moss sought to encourage were still guided by principles outlined in the Curtis Report.¹³ Assessing some institutions, Moss was critical of their accommodation and facilities and of their isolation, expressed concern about single sex establishments, and drew attention to a lack of trained staff. He was keen to see more effort to encourage integration of children with the wider community and wanted to see more use of employment and vocational guidance services. He also urged the societies to abandon barrack-like institutions in favour of cottage homes, boarding-out of more children, or the promotion of adoption as an option.

The Ross Report also criticised the nature of institutional care in Australia. The report noted that not all staff in these institutions had sufficient training, and was critical of the lack of educational and employment opportunities for the children. The larger establishments lacked a 'homely

⁹ For detailed analysis, see <http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/wa/biogs/WE00473b.htm>. Accessed 8-8-13.

¹⁰ House of Commons. (1998). *Op.cit.* p.viii

¹¹ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.49

¹² *Ibid.* p.39

¹³ *Ibid.* p.41

atmosphere', had too little privacy, and separated children by age and gender. The report noted that the separation of siblings indicated a failure to grasp the importance of family-focussed child care. The report also noted that some boys and girls were being exploited as cheap labour.

Contemporary attitudes to child welfare

The findings of the Curtis Committee, and the Moss and Ross reports were not congruent with the standards and arrangements for out-of-home care of child migrants sent to Australia in the 1940s and 50s. The 'best practice' model outlined by Curtis included the following guidelines:

- Support children with their natural parent(s) if possible, and failing that to secure adoption or boarding-out of children with foster parents.
- Where children were to be retained in institutional care, the preferred 'institution' was to be a small group of children, looked after by a married couple, living in 'scattered homes', that is, ordinary houses indistinguishable from others in the neighbourhood.
- If, as a less desirable option, distinctive institutions were to be operated, these should allow children in small groups of different ages and both sexes to be looked after by a trained house 'mother' in purpose built 'cottage homes'.
- Far less acceptable were large 'barrack' institutions, especially those in which children slept in dormitories and dined in large groups. It was also seen as important that children should not be gathered into single-sex institutions.
- Siblings should not be separated.
- Contact with other relatives and friends should be retained.
- Conventional socialisation should occur by arranging for children, if possible, to attend normal state schools and to be involved in local sports and club activities.¹⁴

Despite the UK Government's acceptance of Curtis Report recommendations in March 1947, child migration to Australia continued until 1965. Children were sent to conditions that constituted the opposite of the 'best practice' model specified in the 1945 Curtis Report. As Dr Stephen Constantine concludes: it was 'abundantly clear' that the particular practice of child migration after 1945 was considered by most child care professionals in Britain as at best unnecessary and at worst – unless the Curtis Committee caveat was followed – damaging. Constantine added that the politics of child care ensured that the caveat was dishonoured.¹⁵

Treatment of child migrants in Australia

Unfortunately, history has revealed that a large proportion of child migrants were not well cared for, and suffered serious disadvantages related to their involuntary migration to Australia. In 1996, the Western Australian Select Committee's investigation of child migration identified significant levels of abuse in Catholic orphanages formerly operated in WA. A number of other reports identify a disturbing level and extent of abuse and assault inflicted on many child migrants, with particular attention given to sexual abuse. Christian Brother and historian Br Barry Coldrey points out that: "Severity, violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse were on a continuum. The more severe the regimen the more likely the prevalence of sexual abuse".¹⁶

In 1998 the UK House of Commons Health Committee reported that children sent to Australia "were placed in large, often isolated, institutions and were often subjected to harsh, sometimes intentionally brutal, regimes of work and discipline, unmodified by any real nurturing or encouragement. The institutions were inadequately supervised, monitored and inspected".¹⁷

¹⁴ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.41

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Coldrey, BM, (2000). *Caring and Corruption: Church Orphanages and Industrial Schools*, Studies, Vol 89, No.353, Spring 2000, p.9.

¹⁷ House of Commons (1998). *Op.cit.*

Types of abuse experienced by child migrants

In addition to the more well-known forms of abuse mentioned above, the *Lost innocents* Inquiry found that the following forms of abuse were widespread:

- “Depersonalisation - many former child migrants made reference to their becoming totally depersonalised in their childhood. Their names were changed, they were lied to about the existence of their parents, possessions were removed, gifts and letters were not passed on, and they were referred to by number and not by name. A lifetime lack of self-esteem resulted from such actions leaving a yearning for identity and connection.
- Psychological abuse – was manifested through deliberate, sustained cruelty and emotional deprivation. Constant reference was made to the lack of individualised care and attention, with disparaging and insulting comments about identity being common. Psychological trauma evidenced itself most frequently in high incidences of bed-wetting. Children from several, geographically separated institutions referred to the consequences of bed-wetting in terms of embarrassment, physical beatings and public humiliation in front of their child peers. Bed-wetting flashbacks have plagued mature adults. Many child migrants spoke about the feeling of exile and isolation and the yearning for close contact with a protective, human figure.
- Work practices – daily chores, especially in rural institutions, were so exhausting or time-consuming that children were too tired or had insufficient time for education. Some children were forced to undertake arduous and unsafe manual labour as part of construction work at the institution. Many submitted that wages earned when they were placed in work never materialised and they are still deeply aggrieved.
- Education – educational standards were so limited or virtually non-existent that some child migrants have progressed through life with minimal literacy skills.
- This educational deprivation has led to lifetime effects, especially for employment prospects and adopting itinerant job habits.
- Food and clothing – children were inappropriately clothed for the extreme Australian conditions, often cold, often lacking footwear. Children were not provided with adequate protective clothing to undertake the physical labour they were expected to perform. In many institutions there was a common experience of being constantly hungry and of being aware the nuns and brothers in charge of them always had better quality food. Scavenging and stealing food was reported as a common practice at some institutions.
- After-care – the provision of after-care services was often very poor. Constant reference was made to leaving an institution and being dumped into the alien environment of an unknown community without any experience of that community; about having poor social skills, limited life skills apart from a survival instinct, and little in the way of material and financial resources”.¹⁸

Outcomes of child migration

A series of investigations and reports published over the last thirty years identify a range of negative outcomes for people sent to Australia under the child migration schemes. These outcomes are the sequelae of the abuse and neglect suffered by many child migrants in Australian and UK orphanages, in addition to the specific set of harms associated with child migration. It did not help that the UK government provided a subsistence allowance only until the child migrant turned 14, which increased the number of children who were discharged from Australian orphanages with little or no preparation for life on the outside. Some of the key problems encountered by former child migrants are summarised below.

Access to information and records

A major source of frustration and distress for many former child migrants is the lack of adequate documentation and personal records.

¹⁸ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.73

UK child migrants were generally sent to Australia with only two documents - the Child Migration Medical Examination Report, and the 'L.E.M. 3' Child Migration form. These two-page documents were completed by the Catholic authority responsible for sending the child, and were supposed to include signed consent from the child's parent(s) or guardian. In many instances, the Medical Examination form and the LEM3 are incomplete, and missing the basic information they were designed to collect.

Copies of the two child migration selection documents were retained by the UK and Australian Immigration Departments. Child migrants were not informed of the existence of child migration forms and other personal documents relating to their identity or family history. Many encountered problems when they left an orphanage and found they needed proof of identity, such as a birth certificate, and had great difficulty in obtaining even the most basic personal documentation.

Family medical histories have been largely inaccessible to former child migrants, a considerable proportion of whom have compromised physical health, and therefore have a particular need for this information. The lack of adequate documentation has denied child migrants access to information about childhood illnesses, medical histories for family of origin, and other important documents, such as vaccination records.

The false and/or misleading information provided to child migrants, who were often told they were orphans, has had devastating impacts:

Firstly, because they were told they had no family or that the families did not care for them, they did not try and reunite with them until many years later; secondly, some agencies for many decades clung to the view that child migrants were better off not knowing their backgrounds and therefore offered little or no assistance to former child migrants seeking records, again causing many to give up their search in frustration.¹⁹

Poor record-keeping practices by the sending agencies often resulted in children arriving in Australia with inaccurate information about their personal identity – including their names and dates of birth. Unless one has experienced it, it is hard to imagine the damage to identity caused by finding out that your birthdate is incorrect, or that the name you used throughout childhood was not really yours.

Records were routinely destroyed by agencies involved in child migration, adding further frustration and distress when former child migrants have sought information relating to their personal identity. There is considerable evidence that sending agencies also provided false information to families looking for children who had been sent to Australia.

Loss of national identity and cultural heritage

Some of the implications of removing children from their culture and place of birth are identified in the 1997 *Bringing them Home* report, the Australian Human Rights Commission's report on the separation of Aboriginal children from their families. The report reveals the shattering effects of the forcible removal policies in terms of the broken ties to family, community and country; diminished physical and mental health as a result of psychological, physical and sexual abuse; the loss of language, culture and connection to traditional lands; the loss of parenting skills and the enormous distress of many of its victims today. It also revealed the intergenerational impact and damaging

¹⁹ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.169

effects that forced child removals continue to have on the families and communities from which children were taken.²⁰

The harm arising from geographic removal and relocation is also powerfully conveyed in evidence provided by a former child migrant to the British House of Commons Health Committee's inquiry:

For the vast majority of former child migrants the most often asked question is 'Who am I?' Most of us were born in the British Isles of British parents. Our culture, heritage and traditions are British. Our nationality, our rights and privileges were our inheritance. Unable to make a reasoned decision we were transported twenty thousand kilometres to the other side of the world. Our crime for the most part was that we were the children of broken relationships. Our average age was eight years and nine months. In this one act, we were stripped of our parents and our brothers and sisters. We were stripped of our grandparents and extended families. We were stripped of nationality, culture and birthright. Many of us were stripped of our family name and even our birth date. We were stripped of our personhood, human rights and our dignity. We were referred to as migrant boy number 'so and so' or migrant girl number 'so and so'. And so we arrived, strangers in a strange land, lost and with no way back.²¹

The testimony of this former child migrant also highlights the issue of consent. In some instances, children were asked if they wanted to go to Australia "where they would ride to school on horses, and eat oranges picked straight from the tree". The 'consent' of those children who agreed to go cannot be viewed as a legitimate, given that the children were not of legal age, and their consent was not 'informed'. Research on the abovementioned child migration selection forms conducted by the Catholic Child Welfare Council (UK) in the 1990s found that, of 1149 child migrants, consent by birth parent(s) was given to the migration of children in only 229 instances (20%). In 920 (80%) of instances it is unknown whether or not parental consent was given.²²

Many former child migrants have experienced confusion and distress regarding their national identity and a common assumption was that they were Australian citizens. J's story is characteristic of many:

When J turned 18 he registered on the electoral roll, and voted in each election until he turned 22, when he was informed by his landlady that he wasn't legally allowed to vote. J had believed that as a child migrant he automatically became an Australian citizen. At the time of the discovery, J felt shocked and embarrassed, and he later gained a sense of outrage that no one had ever thought to inform him of these things, or to provide him with basic identification and documentation.²³

Other former child migrants recount similar experiences, and it was not uncommon for young men to be called up and complete National Service without becoming aware they were not citizens of Australia.

Loss of connection to family

Perhaps one of the most devastating outcomes for many former child migrants has been the loss of connection with their families of origin, which was one of the first problems to be formally recognised by governments and other agencies. A major aim of the Select Committee into Child Migration appointed by the Western Australian Legislative Assembly in 1996 was to inquire into and

²⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission (1997). *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, April 1997.

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/>

²¹ House of Commons, *Op.cit.* p.xx

²² Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.272

²³ Unpublished statement, 2008.

report on the action necessary to assist former child migrants in the tracing of their family history and research, the tracing of relatives and reunification with them.

As mentioned above, many child migrants were told they were 'war orphans', leading to long delays in seeking family members. Countless former child migrants only began to search for family in the late 1980s after watching *The Leaving of Liverpool*, a televised program about work by the Child Migrants Trust in uncovering the child migration scandal. L's story is typical in this regard:

"Because information about my family was withheld from me, I did not try to find my family until I was 53. After watching a TV program I contacted the Child Migrants Trust who found out my mother was very much alive. Because of the amount of time elapsed my mother did not want to have a relationship with me or get to know my children – her grandchildren". Like many relinquishing mothers who had lived for decades with the secret of children born out of wedlock, L's mother felt unable to welcome him into her family, which was extremely hurtful and disappointing for L. L believes that if family information had not been withheld from him he would have searched for his mother earlier, and would have stood a much greater chance of being accepted into her life. He may also have been able to meet his grandparents, who were alive until the mid-1970s. L continues to suffer a deep sense of grief for the loss of opportunity to establish a relationship with his family of origin.²⁴

Failure to implement proper duty of care

The lack of follow-up care by sending agencies across the UK, and their failure to monitor the well-being of children sent to Australia is a prominent theme in published literature. The House of Commons Health Committee's 1998 report states that: "A recurrent feature of child migration schemes seems to have been lack of effective monitoring of the children's welfare by either the British Government or the sending agencies. The post-War schemes, particularly to Australia, were excessively permissive. British Government supervision appears to have been non-existent..."²⁵

The Health Committee further reported that:

In our visits we heard of very few local authorities as having been responsible for any of the child migrants we met. This bears out a statement in the Moss Report written in 1952 attached to the DoH memorandum: "local authorities have taken very little interest in the scheme ... There seems to be a feeling in some quarters that it is wrong to send a child, for whom a local authority is responsible, some 10,000 or 12,000 miles away."...[W]e consider the local authorities were correct. This also strongly suggests that it is inadequate to describe the practice of child migration as simply due to "a different social climate" as the DoH memorandum does."²⁶

Following their visit to Australia in 1997, members of the Health Committee described being "appalled at the apparent lack of proper monitoring and inspection" in the large Australian institutions. Committee members noted that "the prime responsibility for the neglect of checking procedures rests with the state governments concerned. But the sending agencies might have been expected to have investigated more thoroughly the conditions in which children were living". There was clearly a breach of guardianship duties in sending the children in the way they were sent and in not monitoring their health and welfare sufficiently'. Furthermore, 'there was a failure to care for them to contemporary standards'."²⁷

The reports and research on child migration are consistent in their findings in this area – ie that abuse and neglect of child migrants was primarily the responsibility of Australian authorities,

²⁴ Unpublished statement, 2008.

²⁵ House of Commons. *Op.cit.* p.x

²⁶ House of Commons. *Op.cit.* p.ix

²⁷ House of Commons. *Op.cit.* p.xv

however, the agencies and statutory authorities complicit in sending children to Australia failed to implement a proper duty of care in regard to their welfare. As Coldrey observes: "Over the thirty years that child migration was planned and operated by Catholic Agencies in Britain and Australia, no British child care leader visited Australia to inspect the Catholic institutions".²⁸

West Australian politician Antonio Buti also attributes shared responsibility between the parties:

"...all participants in the British child migrant scheme - the British and Australian Commonwealth and State governments on one hand and the sending and receiving private agencies on the other hand - collectively were responsible for the breaches of guardianship duties and the resulting consequences and damages. That responsibility centres on the lack of accountability exercised by all parties - a lack of supervision of the institutions to ensure the children's welfare was being well served and protected - fundamental to the role of a guardian".²⁹

Responses and reparations

The hardships and harm experienced by former child migrants have been formally acknowledged by various Commonwealth and State Governments and religious congregations previously involved in child migration. In 1997 the British House of Commons Health Committee accepted that responsibility for matters relating to the welfare of former British child migrants rested with the British Department of Health and commenced an inquiry into child migration. The House of Commons Health Committee, chaired by David Hinchcliffe MP, took evidence in Australia in June 1998. The Committee tabled its report: *The welfare of former British child migrants*, in July 1998.³⁰

In December 1998 the British Health Secretary Frank Dobson accepted the report's main recommendations. He accepted the policy had been misguided and promised assistance to former child migrants by setting up a central database of information in the UK to help former child migrants trace their records and a Support Fund of £1 million over three years to help pay for family reunions.

In January 2000 the Australian Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Phillip Ruddock, tabled the Australian Government response to the British Government response to the recommendations of the British House of Commons Health Committee's report of its inquiry into the welfare of former British child migrants.³¹ The Australian Government agreed to cooperate with the British Government in establishing a central database to help former child migrants trace their families.

In June 2000 the Australian Senate referred the issue of child migration to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee for investigation. Its Report, *Lost Innocents: Righting the record report on child migration*, published in August 2001, noted that the two dominant concerns of child migrant witnesses were loss of identity and the need to have the opportunity to tell their story, be heard and believed. The Report's 33 recommendations included continuing funding to assist reunions, tracing

²⁸ Coldrey, B. (1993) *The Scheme: The Christian Brothers and Childcare in Western Australia*, Argyle-Pacific Publishing, Singapore. p.139.

²⁹ Buti, A. (2002). *British Child Migration to Australia: History, Senate Inquiry and Responsibilities*, MurdochUeJLaw 47; 9(4) Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law. (57)
<http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/MurdochUeJLaw/2002/47.html>

³⁰ Cited in Dow, C. & Phillips, J. (2009). *'Forgotten Australians' and 'Lost Innocents': Child migrants and children in institutional care in Australia*, Social Policy Section, Parliament of Australia, 11-11-2009.
http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/0910/ChildMigrants#_Toc245702529

³¹ <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FVPP06%22>

and access to records; investigations into the institutional abuse of children by all state and territory governments; and formal apologies by Commonwealth and state governments.³²

In November 2009 the Australian Government delivered a formal apology to the 'Forgotten Australians' and former child migrants at a remembrance event in Canberra, ACT. In August 1998, the Western Australian Government had apologised to former British child migrants who suffered sexual, physical and emotional abuse in Western Australian orphanages and institutions. In April 2005, it issued a broader apology to all those who were harmed in institutional care in WA.

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2012-2018) reiterated the findings of previous Inquiries regarding the sexual abuse of child migrants within Australian institutions, and recommended various measures to assist survivors of abuse, including former child migrants. These measures included a promptly-enacted Australian National Apology to victims of institutional child sexual abuse, delivered by the Prime Minister on 22 October 2018.

Forms of reparation and redress

Some of the abovementioned apologies have been accompanied by tangible gestures of regret, such as additional services for child migrants, financial reparation, and travel funds.

Former child migrants abused and/or neglected in Western Australian institutions were eligible to apply for the 'Redress WA' scheme (2008-11), and 13 per cent of applicants (768 people) were former child migrants from the UK or Malta.³³ We estimate that approximately 150 of these applicants would have been Maltese,³⁴ meaning that at least 600 were former child migrants from the UK. All of the Scottish former child migrants in contact with Tuart Place and its forerunner services submitted applications to the Redress WA scheme. Unfortunately, the scheme was effectively ruined in August 2009, after all the 5,917 applications had been received, when a newly-elected State Government drastically reduced the advertised payment levels. The maximum payment of AUD\$80,000 was lowered to \$45,000, and the minimum payment was halved, from \$10,000 to \$5,000. A decade after the event, survivors of the Redress WA scheme still describe a deep sense of betrayal.

The British Government's apology to former child migrants in 2010 was followed by its 'Family Restoration' travel fund, which is still in operation. The decision to implement another travel scheme was widely criticised by former child migrants because many were unable to make use of the fund, either because they have never been able to locate any family in the UK; they are too ill or otherwise unable to take the long flight to the UK; or they have not made a successful connection with any family members in the UK. For this cohort, the 'take it or leave it' offer of funded travel has added insult to injury, and many expressed a firm preference for financial reparation, which is viewed as a more respectful option.

The UK Government's Ex-gratia Payment Scheme for British former child migrants, announced on 19 December 2018, has been well received by former child migrants living in Australia. We are not aware of any who have not already applied for, and received, the £20,000 payment.

An Australian National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse (including former child migrants), which commenced on 1 January 2019, has been less well received. A sexual-abuse-only scheme is fundamentally inadequate for survivors whose institutional abuse occurred

³² Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.xvi

³³ Western Australian Department for Communities (2012). *Redress WA Final Report*, prepared by Dr M. Rock.

³⁴ The Maltese-Australian child migration scheme operated between 1950 and 1965. Only 310 Maltese child migrants were sent to Australia (303 of whom were sent to Western Australia).

while they were Wards of the State, living in closed residential settings, where abuse and neglect was generally pervasive and multi-faceted (as it was for child migrants). The capacity of the Australian redress scheme to 'alleviate the suffering of survivors' has been further impaired by logistical and legislative challenges that have left the scheme operating as a poor shadow of the model scheme recommended by the Australian Royal Commission.

Scottish former child migrants have been well served by the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, which is comprehensively examining all forms of institutional abuse and neglect, rather than narrowly focussing on sexual abuse. SCAI representatives have travelled to Australia to gather evidence from former child migrants, holding private sessions wherever was most comfortable and convenient for the survivor. Other UK Inquires gathering evidence from former child migrants living in Australia have not been as accommodating. Witnesses have either had to travel to the UK to give evidence or meet within prescribed venues within Australia.

The Scottish Government is also to be commended for implementing an Advance Payment Scheme in April 2019, enabling terminally ill and elderly survivors of institutional abuse to access a £10,000 payment, prior to a forthcoming statutory redress process. The Advance Payment Scheme commenced while the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is still in progress, whereas in other jurisdictions elderly survivors have had to wait a long time after the conclusion of an Inquiry or Commission for any kind of redress to be made available. Some have died waiting. Many Scottish former child migrants – all of whom are aged over 70 – have applied for Advance Payments. By all reports, the process has been straightforward and timely.

A number of former child migrants have also engaged with the Future Pathways program, another admirable initiative by the Scottish Government. Future Pathways offers individually tailored support to help survivors of institutional abuse and neglect achieve a better quality of life. Scottish former child migrants living in Australia have accessed a variety of benefits and have spoken highly of the assistance they have received from the Future Pathways program and its staff. At a time when it is becoming increasingly evident that the very processes set up to help survivors often inflict further (unintentional) harm, it is refreshing to see these processes done well.

Conclusion

The Tuart Place Report on the impacts of child migration has identified a range of harms and negative outcomes of child migration experienced by former child migrants from Scotland and other parts of the UK.

The Report demonstrates that unaccompanied children were still being shipped from Scotland to Australia for many years after this practice was recognised as harmful. The 'best practice' model of child care outlined in the 1945 Curtis Report recommended that children should be accommodated within small, mixed-sex 'family-style' groups; sibling connections should be maintained; and contact with other relatives, friends and local communities should be facilitated. None of these conditions were met by the Catholic receiving agencies in Australia.

Children sent to Australia had almost no chance of experiencing the kind of family life that was recognised as best practice in the UK, and migrant children were destined to spend their childhoods in regimented, barrack-style accommodation, separated from siblings, with little or no contact with children (or adults) of the opposite sex.

Had these children remained in Scotland they may have had opportunities to establish links with extended family or to be fostered or adopted, but in Australia they had no chance. As stated in the *Lost Innocents* Report: "Neither private fostering nor adoption of child migrants was favoured, partly

for legal reasons as the death of the parents of refugee children might be impossible to determine".³⁵ Private adoption of child migrants was very rare, and of the 624 child migrants known to this agency, only two were adopted by families in Australia (neither of these were Scottish children). Some child migrants spent time with local 'holiday families', however, they were always returned to the orphanage once the holiday was over.

While some former child migrants identify various benefits of living in Australia, the negatives inevitably out-weigh the positives, primarily because of the way in which children were selected and sent away from their country of birth. There is substantial evidence that the great majority of child migrants have experienced a loss of national and personal identity as a direct result of their migration. Many, many former child migrants describe feeling that they do not really 'belong' anywhere – not in Australia, and not in their country of origin.

Some of the problems encountered by child migrants could have been avoided if local authorities and sending agencies had kept accurate information and been open and honest in sharing it with those formerly in their care. However, vital documents were routinely destroyed and, in many cases, information that could have helped reconnect people and reunite families was deliberately withheld.

The lack of information available to child migrants had devastating effects. Countless child migrants missed out on meeting their mothers because they died before they could be found. Family reunifications have also been fraught with problems, and the success rate among those lucky enough to find each other has been dismally low. How do you establish a meaningful connection with a person you have met once or twice who lives 15,000 kilometres away? There may be a biological connection but you have grown up in different cultures and have little in common. There have been some wonderful exceptions, but sadly they are rare, and even these 'lucky' individuals still face the tyranny of distance – a major obstacle to maintaining an ongoing family connection. Options for staying in touch have often been further restricted by impaired literacy skills and/or lack of access to communication technology.

It is clear that the abuse and neglect experienced by child migrants in Australia was primarily the responsibility of local authorities and individuals, however, the agencies and statutory authorities complicit in sending children to Australia failed to implement a proper duty of care in regard to their welfare, and there were clear breaches of guardianship obligations.

Had these children remained in Scotland they may well have suffered the types of abuse reported by ex-residents of Scottish orphanages, however they would not have experienced the additional range of harms specific to child migration.

The evidence cited in this Report indicates that there was a long-standing and pervasive failure in the duty of care exercised by authorities in Scotland and other parts of the UK to ensure that the children in their care were protected. Conditions in Scotland's orphanages may not have been ideal, but the solution was not to send vulnerable children to the other side of the world.

³⁵ Senate Community Affairs References Committee (2001) *Op.cit.* p.25