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'Forgotten Australians' and 'Lost Innocents': child migrants and children in institutional care in Australia

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Introduction

This background note provides a brief overview and history of the arrival of child migrants from the United Kingdom and government responses to claims of their mistreatment whilst in institutional care in Australia.¹ These children who arrived in Australia between 1920 and 1967 have been referred to in a number of Senate inquiries as the 'Lost Innocents'.²

Similarly, Australian-born children raised in institutional care during this time have also claimed mistreatment. During the 1995 inquiry into the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and the calls for an apology and compensation to Aboriginal children, non-Aboriginal children who also suffered in institutions called themselves the 'Forgotten Australians' and lobbied for similar recognition of past injustices.³ This background note also provides an overview of government responses to their claims.

Child migrants

Background

Under the *Empire Settlement Act* of 1922 and 1937, the British Government assisted private organisations to help people who wanted to settle in 'His Majesty's Overseas Dominions.' Although not specifically aimed at assisting child migrants, this legislation allowed non-government organisations to send child migrants to various parts of the British Empire. The scheme intensified after the war when child migrants were sent under the *Children's Act 1948*. Although non-government organisations had direct charge of most of the children at the recruitment stage, during their passage, or after their arrival in the receiving countries, they received encouragement and financial backing from British governments and governments in receiving countries. About 150 000 children with an average age of eight years and nine months emigrated from the United Kingdom, the majority to Canada, until the

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1. These issues were covered in earlier online versions of this background note in C Dow and D Watt, *Child migrants from the United Kingdom*, E-brief, 2000–01, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, October 2001 and J Phillips and C Dow, *Child migrants from the United Kingdom*, Background note, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 26 August 2009.
 2. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents: righting the record—report on child migration*, Canberra, 30 August 2001, viewed 13 July 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/1999-02/child_migrat/report/index.htm
 3. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*, Canberra, 2004, viewed 30 October 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/2004-07/inst_care/report/report.pdf

scheme ended in 1967.⁴ A key motivation for child migration was to maintain the racial unity of the Empire and populate the Dominions of Canada, Rhodesia, New Zealand and Australia, with 'good white stock'.

The exact number of child migrants to Australia is not known, but estimates suggest that from 1947 to 1967, between 7000 and 10 000 children were sent to Australia.⁵ A feature of the scheme was the care of children in residential institutions rather than by foster care or adoption. Most were placed in the care of Barnardos, the Fairbridge Society, the Church of England and the Christian Brothers.⁶ The House of Commons Health Committee concluded that 'children 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'.⁷

The Child Migrants Trust

In 1987 a specialist social work agency, the Child Migrants Trust, was established with branches in Perth, Melbourne and the United Kingdom. The Trust contributed to public awareness of the history of child migrants and the mental and physical abuses suffered by many of the children. It continues to provide counselling services to child migrants, help with reuniting families and acts as a lobby group. Although not all children claim mistreatment, the Trust points out that 'little attention was given to the long-term implications of separating children from their families, their friends, their social context and their country on a permanent basis'.⁸

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4. Great Britain, House of Commons, Select Committee on Health, *The welfare of former British child migrants*, London, 30 July 1998, Volume I - Report HC 755-I, Background, viewed 30 October 2009, <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmhealth/755/75504.htm>
 5. *ibid.*
 6. For a detailed account of the scheme in Australia see: Child Migrants Trust, *Submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Child Migration*, January 2001, viewed 30 October 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/1999-02/child_migrat/submissions/sub132.pdf
 7. House of Commons Health Committee, *op. cit.*
 8. Child Migrants Trust, *op. cit.*, p. 9. For an alternative account of the scheme in Australia see G Sherington, *Fairbridge, Empire and child migration*, University of Western Australia Press, 1998.

In 1990 the Australian Government announced it would provide \$120 000 over three years to the Child Migrant Trust to fund a case worker and counselling services in Australia.⁹ Similar amounts were provided each year by the Government until funding ceased in June 2008.¹⁰

Awareness of the history of the scheme and its legacy also resulted from the work of Margaret Humphreys, founder of the Child Migrants Trust. Humphreys visited Australia a number of times in the 1980s and assisted in establishing the Australian branches. She was awarded an Order of Australia in 1993 for her work with child migrants in Australia. Humphreys's book *Empty Cradles*, along with a number of other books and television series, notably *Lost children of the Empire* broadcast in 1989, helped in the successful campaign to have the British government inquire into the scheme and the welfare of former migrants.¹¹

British Government responses to the child migration scheme

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 1998.¹²

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. To qualify for assistance under the Fund, former child migrants had to be able to show that they had traced a close family relative, (mother, father, brother,

9. R Ray (Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs), *Government offers assistance to former U.K. child migrants*, media release, Canberra, 14 February 1990.

10. See G Hardgrave (Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs), *Child migrants to benefit from new package of measures*, media release, Canberra, 13 May 2002, viewed 11 November 2009

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FYNJ66%22> ; J Cobb (Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs), *New funding announced for the Child Migrants Trust*, media release, Canberra, 11 October 2005; Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee, *Answers to Questions on Notice, Immigration and Citizenship Portfolio, Budget Estimates*, 29 May 2008, Question 59.

11. See M Humphreys, *Empty cradles: one woman's fight to uncover Britain's most shameful secrets*, Doubleday, London, 1994; and P Bean, *Lost children of the Empire*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1989. Child migrant experiences were portrayed in the television documentary, *Lost children of the Empire*, broadcast in 1989, and in the television mini-series *The leaving of Liverpool* broadcast on ABC TV in 1994.

12. House of Commons Health Committee, op. cit.

sister, aunt or uncle), and that they wished to reunite for the first time, but could not meet the costs of travel to the UK. The Child Migrant Support Fund (CMSF) operated until October 2002.¹³

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*.¹⁴ The Australian Government agreed to cooperate with the British Government in establishing a central database to help former child migrants trace their families.

Australian Government inquiries and responses

In June 2000 the Senate referred the issue of child migration to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee for investigation and report. In August 2001 the committee published its report, *Lost innocents: righting the record—report on child migration*. The Committee noted that 'the two dominant concerns of child migrant witnesses were their loss of identity and their need to have the opportunity to tell their story, be heard and believed'.¹⁵ It concluded that the 'Committee's inquiry clearly showed that issues associated with child migration to Australia had not been extensively covered and deserved the thorough Australia-wide attention the Senate inquiry was able to deliver'.¹⁶ The report made 33 recommendations, including continued funding to assist reunions, tracing and access to records; that all state and territory governments undertake inquiries into the abuse of children in institutions; and that the Commonwealth and state governments all issue 'formal statements' expressing 'deep sorrow and regret for the psychological, social and economic harm caused to the children'.¹⁷

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13. See the UK Committee's recommendations on the UK Parliament's archive page <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200001/cmselect/cmhealth/152/15206.htm>
 14. For details see the Minister's press release, P Ruddock (Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) *Child migrant inquiry—Minister tables Australian response*, media release, Parliament House, Canberra, 27 January 2000, viewed 4 August 2009, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FVPP06%22>
 15. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents: righting the record—report on child migration*, op. cit., prologue (in html version only). viewed 13 July 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/1999-02/child_migrat/report/index.htm
 16. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents: righting the record*, op. cit., p. 3.
 17. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents: righting the record*, op. cit., Recommendation 30.

On 13 May 2002 the Government tabled the *Commonwealth Government response to Lost innocents: righting the record: the report of the Community Affairs References Committee on child migration*. The response supported and welcomed the committee's report and expressed regret for 'the injustices and suffering that some child migrants may have experienced as a result of past practices in relation to child migration'.¹⁸ There was no promise of a formal statement of apology. The government emphasised practical measures and announced a \$3.7 million package that included: \$1 million per year over three years for travel funding to assist former child migrants to return to the UK; \$100 000 for state memorials to commemorate former child migrants; and \$125 000 per year over three years to the Child Migrants Trust.¹⁹

Children in institutional care

In 2003 the Senate Community Affairs References Committee conducted a broader inquiry into the treatment of all children in institutional care.²⁰ In August 2004 the committee released the first report, *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.²¹ This report documented in detail the role played by governments, religious groups and others in the institutional care of children in Australia; the types of abuse experienced; the lifelong impacts of care; and some of the apologies or expressions of regret that had been made by various institutions at that time. It made 39 recommendations, including that the Commonwealth and state governments (that had not already done so) issue formal statements acknowledging the harm experienced by many children in institutional care.

On 17 March 2005 the Senate Community Affairs References Committee released the second report on institutional or out of home care, *Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge*.²² This second report documented some of the responses by churches and other

18. Commonwealth Government, *Commonwealth Government response to Lost innocents: righting the record: the report of the Community Affairs References Committee on child migration*, Canberra, 13 May 2002, viewed 15 July 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/recs_lost_innocents_forgotten_aust_rpts/recs/gov_resp_cm.pdf

19. G Hardgrave (Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs), *Child migrants to benefit from new package of measures*, op. cit.

20. See 'Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care', Senate Community Affairs Committee website, viewed 16 July 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/2004-07/inst_care/index.htm

21. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*, Canberra, August 2004, viewed 16 July 2009, http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/inst_care/report/report.pdf

22. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge: second report on the inquiry into children in institutional or out-of-home care*,

agencies to the first report; gave more details on issues such as children in care with disabilities; and listed some of the state and territory reports on child protection and care. The report made 18 recommendations including the need for a national commissioner for children to drive a national reform agenda for child protection.

On 10 November 2005 the Government tabled the *Australian Government response to the Committee's reports: Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children, and, Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge: second report on the inquiry into children in institutional or out of home care*.²³ The Commonwealth Government welcomed both reports and stated in its response that the 'suffering experienced by so many children placed in institutional care is a matter for shame for this country'.²⁴ However, the response asserted that most of the recommendations in both reports were a matter for the state governments to consider, not the federal government.

On 25 June 2009 the Senate Community Affairs References Committee released the *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited* progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians reports.²⁵ The report documented the progress made to date on the implementation of the recommendations of the previous two reports. The report found that the responses had been variable with some progress being made in some jurisdictions and little or none in others. Once again, the Committee recommended that the Commonwealth Government, state governments and religious organisations (who have not already done so) issue 'formal acknowledgement and expression of regret' both to child migrants and other children who suffered abuse in institutions. The report made 16 recommendations, including a call for South Australia, NSW and Victoria to establish redress schemes; and a call for a whole of government approach and

Canberra, March 2005, viewed 16 July 2009,
http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/2004-07/inst_care/report2/report.pdf

23. Commonwealth Government, *Australian Government response to the Committee's reports: Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children, and, Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge: second report on the inquiry into children in institutional or out of home care*, Canberra, 2005, viewed 16 July 2009,
http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/inst_care/gov_response/gov_response.pdf
24. Commonwealth Government, *Australian Government response to the Committee's reports: Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*, op. cit., p. 1.
25. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited: report on the progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians reports*, Canberra, June 2009, viewed 15 July 2009,
http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/recs_lost_innocents_forgotten_aust_rpts/report/report.pdf

consistency across jurisdictions for the provision of support services and the handling of abuse claims.²⁶

Stakeholder groups were disappointed with the responses. In its submission to the most recent Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry, the Child Migrants Trust commended the Commonwealth for holding the original inquiry into child migration, but believes that responses so far have been 'too half hearted in tone and spirit'.²⁷ In another submission, the International Association of Former Child Migrants called for a formal apology and spoke of the ongoing grief still felt by child migrants today:

It would give us a level or a measure of how far the present government is prepared to take our cause. What needs to be put to the committee is the level of grief that is still being suffered today by hundreds of former child migrants.²⁸

State government responses

Many of the state governments have issued general apologies to children abused in institutions (QLD, NSW, SA, TAS and VIC), but Western Australia is the only state to have apologised specifically to child migrants. While these apologies have been received positively by stakeholders, many are critical of the substance of the statements, claiming that state governments have generally failed to accept full responsibility for the wrongdoing.²⁹ A number of states have also established redress schemes (QLD, TAS and WA) or are considering them (SA). However, Victoria and NSW have indicated that they will not establish schemes.³⁰

The following section briefly documents the major state government responses to the issues associated with child migration to Australia or children in institutional care.

Western Australia

On 13 August 1998 the Western Australian Government apologised to former British child migrants who suffered sexual, physical and emotional abuse in Western Australian orphanages and institutions. However, the Western Australian government voted against a

26. *ibid.*, pp. ix–xi.

27. *ibid.*, p. 8.

28. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

29. For example the NSW apology received a great deal of criticism. See Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23.

30. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36.

proposal to re-establish a select committee set up by the previous government to investigate the needs of former child migrants, or to implement the recommendations of the Select Committee's Interim Report. The parliamentary motion was:

That this House apologise to the former child migrants on behalf of all Western Australians for the past policies that led to their forced migration and the subsequent maltreatment so many experienced and express deep regret at the hurt and distress that this caused.³¹

On 7 April 2005 the Western Australian Government issued an apology to 'people who were harmed in institutional care'.³²

On 17 December 2007 the Western Australian Government announced the establishment of Redress WA for children abused and neglected in state care.³³ Benefits from Redress WA for children abused in institutions include counselling services, compensation payments, an acknowledgement of abuse and an apology.³⁴

Queensland

In 1999 the treatment of child migrants in Queensland was included in the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions* (Forde report), tabled in the Queensland Parliament on 8 June 1999.³⁵ Following the tabling of the report, a formal apology was issued by: the then Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie; the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, Anna Bligh; the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane; the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane; the Moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia (Qld Synod); the Territorial Commander, Australian Eastern Territory, of the Salvation Army; the President of the Baptist Union of Queensland and the Conference President for the Churches

31. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, op. cit., p. 14.

32. *ibid.*, p. 31.

33. *ibid.*, p. 44.

34. See 'Redress WA', Western Australia Department of Communities website, viewed 12 August 2009, <http://www.redress.wa.gov.au/about.asp>

35. Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into abuse of children in Queensland institutions*, (Forde report), Queensland, 1999, viewed 16 July 2009, <http://www.qld.gov.au/html/fordeinquiry/inquiryreport.html>

of Christ in Queensland.³⁶ The Forde inquiry led to the creation of a redress scheme on 1 October 2007.³⁷

South Australia

In November 2004 the Commission of inquiry into children in state care was established by the South Australian Parliament (the Mullighan inquiry). In 2005, the *Interim report of the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry*, was completed, and in 2008 the final report, *Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry: allegations of sexual abuse and death from criminal conduct*, was presented to the South Australian Parliament by the chair, E.P. Mullighan QC. The reports documented detailed allegations of systematic abuse in South Australia.³⁸

On 17 June 2008 the South Australian Government, together with the churches, issued a formal apology to those who suffered or witnessed abuse or neglect whilst in state care.³⁹

In July 2008 the South Australian Government established a task force to examine redress schemes for child victims of sexual abuse.⁴⁰

New South Wales

On 23 June 2005, the NSW Government formally apologised for the harm and distress suffered by children in NSW institutions.⁴¹

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36. To view the apology and related documents see: 'Forde Inquiry into abuse of children in Queensland institutions', Queensland Government website, viewed 16 July 2009, <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/redress-scheme/forde-inquiry.html>
 37. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, op. cit., p. 38; See: 'About the redress scheme', Queensland Government website, viewed 12 August 2009, <http://www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/community/redress-scheme/about-scheme.html>
 38. SA Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry, *Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry: allegations of sexual abuse and death from criminal misconduct*, 2008, viewed 12 August 2009, http://dpl/Books/2008/SA_ChildrenInStateCare.pdf
 39. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, op. cit., p. 25. For the apology see: 'Apologies received', the Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN) website, viewed 4 August 2009, http://www.clan.org.au/apologies_received.php
 40. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, op. cit., p. 40.
 41. *ibid.*, p. 21.

Victoria

On 9 August 2006 an apology was delivered in the Victorian Parliament to all those who suffered abuse, neglect or a lack of care in out-of-home care.⁴²

In 2008 Victoria announced it would not establish a redress scheme, but that it would deal with abuse claims on a case-by-case basis.⁴³

Tasmania

In August 2003 the Tasmanian Government announced a redress scheme for past abuse of children while in state care (in response to an inquiry by the Tasmanian Ombudsman).⁴⁴

In December 2004 the Premier of Tasmania issued an apology to those people abused while in state care. It was delivered in the Legislative Assembly on 17 May 2005.⁴⁵

Responses by religious organisations

In terms of responses from the churches and other responsible agencies, the Senate Community Affairs References Committee noted in its latest report that very little of note has occurred since the church apologies made in response to the *Forgotten Australians* report published in 2004.⁴⁶

The following briefly documents some of the community and religious organisation responses to the issues associated with child migration to Australia or children in institutional care:

- In July 1993 the Christian Brothers issued a public apology for the abuses that they admitted had taken place at their child-care institutions. They have funded travel by former child migrants to make family reunions.⁴⁷

42. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, op. cit., p. 29.

43. *ibid.*, p. 42.

44. *ibid.*, p. 41.

45. *ibid.*, p. 28.

46. *ibid.*, p. 211.

47. See: M Harries, *A welcome change in attitude*, Christian Brothers Ex-Residents and Student Services Ex-Press, issue 2, vol. 4, June 2001, viewed 16 July 2009, <http://www.cberss.org/archive/ex-press.asp151.htm>

- In December 1996 the Australian Catholic Bishops and the Leaders of Religious Institutes issued an apology to those abused whilst under the care of Catholic institutions in the 'Towards Healing' document.⁴⁸ The apology stated:

As bishops and leaders of religious institutes of the Catholic Church in Australia, we acknowledge with deep sadness and regret that a number of clergy and religious have sexually abused children, adolescents and adults who have been in their pastoral care. To these victims we offer our sincere apology.⁴⁹

- In 1997 the Rockhampton Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy apologised to former residents for abuses that occurred under their care at St. Joseph's Home, Nerkool.⁵⁰
- In 1999 the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the Poor Sisters of Nazareth launched PHIND: the Personal History Index for former child migrants to Catholic Homes in Australia.⁵¹
- In August 2003 the Salvation Army issued an apology for abuses to children under their care in institutions.⁵²
- In February 2004 Barnados and Wesley Mission issued apologies to children for abuses under their care in institutions.⁵³
- In September 2004 the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn issued an unreserved apology to people cared for in institutions in that Diocese. On 6 October 2004, the General Synod of the Anglican Church issued an apology to the children who experienced neglect or harm in its institutions and on 25 October 2004 the Sydney Synod issued an apology of its own.⁵⁴
- On 27 September 2004 the Uniting Church issued a statement expressing regret and sorrow at the neglect and abuse of children in institutional care by the church.

48. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge*, op. cit., p. 5.

49. Australian Catholic Bishops and the Leaders of Religious Institutes, *Towards healing*, media release, December 1996.

50. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents: righting the record—report on child migration*, op. cit., p. 229.

51. See the Christian Brothers website, viewed 16 July 2009, <http://www.cberss.org/archive/phind.asp.htm>

52. Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, op. cit., p. 32.

53. *ibid.*

54. *ibid.*, p. 4.

- On 14 December 2004 the Australian Catholic Bishops and the Leaders of Religious Institutes renewed an apology first made in the 'Towards Healing' document from 1996.⁵⁵
- On 19 July 2008 Pope Benedict offered a general apology to victims of sexual abuse by the Catholic clergy in Australia.⁵⁶

A formal apology

On 30 August 2009, the anniversaries of the tabling of the landmark committee reports, the Australian Government announced that by the end of 2009 it would 'issue a formal statement of acknowledgement and apology, on behalf of the nation, to Forgotten Australians and former child migrants. In the spirit of the bipartisan nature of the Senate Inquiry reports, the Government will work with the Opposition to develop the remembrance event'.⁵⁷

The apology to the 'Forgotten Australians' and former child migrants will occur in Canberra on 16 November 2009:

A formal remembrance ceremony will be held in the Members' Hall in Parliament House where the Prime Minister will apologise, on behalf of the nation, to more than 500 000 Australians—many of whom suffered abuse and neglect while in out-of-home care last century. They include more than 7000 child migrants who arrived under historical child migration schemes and who were often subsequently placed in homes and orphanages.

The apology will acknowledge that what happened in the past was both real and wrong. It will make sure that a largely invisible part of our history is put firmly on the record. And it will remind the community of what happened to many of these children—the loss of family, the loss of identity and, in the case of child migrants, the loss of their country.⁵⁸

Following the event, the apology will be tabled in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

55. *ibid.*, p. 5.

56. *ibid.*, p. 32.

57. J Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) *Australian Government to apologise to Forgotten Australians and Lost Innocents*, media release, Canberra, 30 August 2009, viewed 10 November 2009, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FFGNU6%22>

58. J Macklin (Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) *National apology to the Forgotten Australians and former child migrants*, media release, 27 October 2009, viewed 10 November 2009, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FD2V6%22>

Former Democrats senator and a former child migrant, Andrew Murray, said 'the apology was the culmination of a decade-long Senate campaign. He said it would be symbolic and emotional Rubicon for hundreds of thousands of people who had been let down by governments that had failed in their duty of care'.⁵⁹

Key resources

- Bean P, *Lost children of the Empire*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1989.
- Gill A, *Orphans of the Empire: the shocking story of child migration to Australia*, Random House, Sydney, 1997.
- Hill D, *The forgotten children: Fairbridge Farm School and its betrayal of Australia's child migrants*, Random House Australia, NSW, 2007.
- Humphreys M, *Empty cradles: one woman's fight to uncover Britain's most shameful secrets*, Doubleday, London, 1994.
- International Social Service (ISS), [*The journey of discovery: a report on the Australian former Child Migrant Travel Fund*](#), Australian Branch, October 2005.
- National Archives of Australia (NAA): the National Archives published a research guide to archival records on child migration, [*Good British stock: child and youth migration to Australia 1901–83*](#). It includes an overview and history of child migration to Australia as well as a guide to the National Archives records. Fact sheets include [*Child migration to Australia*](#), fact sheet number 124; and [*Child migrant records found in Sydney*](#) fact sheet number 147.
- Phillips J, [*Child abuse and protection in Australia*](#), Background note, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, March 2009 (includes a list of state and territory child abuse inquiries).
- Senate Community Affairs References Committee reports:
 - [*Lost innocents: righting the record—report on child migration*](#), 2001
 - [*Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*](#), first report, 2004
 - [*Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge: second report on the inquiry into children in institutional or out-of-home care*](#), 2005

59. J Gordon, 'At last: apology for the abused and neglected', *Sun Herald*, 30 August 2009, p. 5, viewed 10 November 2009, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpre-ssclp%2FFJJU6%22>

- [Australian Government response to the Committee's reports: *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children, and, Protecting vulnerable children: a national challenge. Second report on the inquiry into children in institutional or out of home care*, 2005](#)
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- Snow P, [*Neither waif nor stray: the search for a stolen identity*](#), Universal Publishers, 2000. Written from the Canadian perspective.

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