

Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme

Public Hearing – 08 December 2020
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Disposing of assets

Question reference number: IQ20-000057

Senator: Louise Pratt

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page/s: 5 - 6

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 23 December 2020

Question:

Senator PRATT: In a general sense, the parliament was confident that we had a money trail that we could follow under those circumstances, but I think Fairbridge, even historically, when we put Redress together, was always a marginal proposition in that context, as far as I could tell, even reflecting on the parliamentary debates at the time. It's not the fault of the bureaucracy; it might well be our fault as legislators, but there are still significant assets that Fairbridge used right around the country.

Ms Campbell: I understand your point, which is: who now has the economic benefit from those assets?

Senator PRATT: Did they buy them or were they given them? If they bought them, then where did that money go?

Ms Campbell: We can take your question on notice, but my understanding of the legislation is it relates to the entity as it stands.

Senator PRATT: I understand: you're limited by that, but it's our job to be curious about these things so that we can try and fix those problems.

Ms McGuirk: We'll look at what research was done before anyone here at the table was working in the scheme and come back to you on notice with what we can find.

Senator PRATT: Thank you. I think that's me sorted.

Answer:

The table provides information on five known Fairbridge institutions in Australia.

Institution	Asset Disposal
Northcote Farm, Northcote, Victoria	The facility was closed in 1979 and used for replacement family group homes and support other regional family service programs. Some of the land was donated to a state department and is now being used as a camp ground, on a lease arrangement with a non-government organisation.
Fairbridge Farm School, Tresca, Tasmania	Tresca closed in 1976. In 1979 a committee of non-government organisations took over the land, which is now the property of West Tamar Council, who lease the land to the Tresca Community Centre Committee.
Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra, Western Australia	A private company purchased the land for an unknown price in 1981. The proceeds were repatriated to the Fairbridge Society in Britain. It is now used as accommodation for activities for schools or community groups.
Fairbridge Farm School, Molong, New South Wales	The Farm was sold to a private owner in 1974. Funds from the sale were administered by a foundation with responsibility for distributing its revenues, as donations, to charitable institutions for underprivileged children.
Drapers Hall, Crafers, South Australia	Drapers' Hall closed in 1981 and was sold to the South Australian government. It subsequently became a respite care facility, known as the Crafers Community Unit, run by the Strathmont Centre, for people with an intellectual disability. In the late 1980s the building was sold and became a private home. Proceeds were used to found (but not sustain) the Kingsley Fairbridge Child Development Unit at Adelaide Children's Hospital.