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,	The facility was closed in 1979 and used for replacement family group
Northcote,	homes and support other regional family service programs. Some of the
Victoria	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	Tresca closed in 1976. In 1979 a committee of non-government
School, Tresca,	organisations took over the land, which is now the property of West
Tasmania	Tamar Council, who lease the land to the Tresca Community Centre
	Committee.
Fairbridge Farm	A private company purchased the land for an unknown price in 1981.
School, Pinjarra,	The proceeds were repatriated to the Fairbridge Society in Britain. It is
Western	now used as accommodation for activities for schools or community
Australia	groups.
Fairbridge Farm	The Farm was sold to a private owner in 1974. Funds from the sale were
School, Molong,	administered by a foundation with responsibility for distributing its
New South	revenues, as donations, to charitable institutions for underprivileged
Wales	children.
Drapers Hall,	Drapers' Hall closed in 1981 and was sold to the South Australian
Crafers, South	government. It subsequently became a respite care facility, known as the
Australia	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.