

5. The 1957 reforms were included in a formal three year agreement between the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and the Fairbridge Society on July 30, 1957. The main reforms identified in the agreement and to be introduced to Fairbridge Farms in Australia included:

- Staff 'shall be as far as possible persons with knowledge and experience of child care methods'
- Children should be 'assimilated into Australian life' and as far as possible 'take part in the normal life of the community'
- Wherever possible children were to be boarded 'permanently with foster parents'
- Children were not to be held back 'between leaving school and entering employment' and used as cheap farm labourers but found proper jobs with training and apprenticeships
- An adequate standard of 'comfort and amenity' was to be introduced into the children's cottages

6. The agreement, included a provision that British Government could end funding of Fairbridge child migration if the reforms at Fairbridge were not implemented:

'The Secretary of State, if he is not satisfied with the manner in which the said scheme is being administered or carried out in any respect may, by not less than three months previous notice given to the society at any time, terminate his obligations hereunder to such extent as may be stated in the said notice'.

7. The agreement was conveyed by UK Fairbridge Society in October 1957 but the reforms were not implemented.

8. The staff continued to be appointed with no qualifications and no experience in child care. During the time I was at Fairbridge between 1959 and 1961 I recall most of the staff were overwhelmingly unqualified, inexperienced and totally unsuited to caring for children. The staff included sadistic cottage mothers who dragged small children from their beds at night and whipped them with riding crops or electric cords and inflicted physical punishment on those who wet their beds. In one case a cottage mother admitted holding a six year old girl's head down the toilet in an attempt to cure her of bed wetting.

9. There was no increased assimilation and children continued to be geographically and socially isolated from the local community after I reached Fairbridge Molong in June 1959. Children of primary school age at Fairbridge Molong rarely left the farm. The majority of secondary school children were bussed into and back from the local school in Molong and might be taken to play sport on Saturday afternoons at either Molong or Orange but otherwise rarely left the farm. Some of the children were sent to spend holidays with private families but the