

more than forty years without even a birthday or Christmas card from home. Some of us were as young as four years of age when we were sent to a life of hell on earth.

- 19.6. Given the earlier 'lamentably low' funding allocated to this issue, in the Select Committee's own words, these new policies could be offered as a good response, even though they clearly failed to match the level of need **[IAFCMF13]**. Again, this was a critical time when we were failed again – when hopes were high, yet some of us missed the opportunity to meet with our mothers and fathers who died during this period.
- 19.7. Although there was improved funding for the Child Migrants Trust, a much more decisive and bold approach was required, given the backlog of work created by several years of inadequate grants. Again, the Government seemed to lack the sense of urgency needed to find parents before it was too late.
- 19.8. Our call for central archiving of our records was also rejected. This is a critical consideration given the deporting agencies poor track record on treating former child migrants with honesty and respect. How can we trust them with records which, for many, hold the key to finding and reuniting with our families? Central archiving of our historical records would have at the very least changed the power dynamic between former child migrants and those agencies that abused and deceived us.
- 19.9. Our proposal for a database was accepted. Sadly, we were not consulted about how this would be implemented or how much it would cost. On reflection, it did not prove a sound investment. The considerable resources would have been better spent on the Child Migrants Trust or the Travel Fund.
- 19.10. After the Select Committee reported, the Australian Government refused our request for a similar inquiry. We lobbied prominent opposition politicians and held a demonstration in Canberra in February 2000, which led to a Senate inquiry **[IAFCMF14]**.
- 19.11. Many of our earlier UK recommendations were retained as they were just as relevant in Australia. We appeared in person to speak to our full, written submission before the inquiry. Once again, we argued the case for a judicial inquiry, a national apology, compensation and centralised records. All these proposals were rejected as well as ways to learn lessons from these policies.
- 19.12. The UK and Australian governments responded to each inquiry by rejecting any form of national compensation or a judicial inquiry to consider the wider issues, including the case for financial redress.