

187. I have been asked to provide details about the Western Australian Select Committee Inquiry into Child Migration in 1996. I propose to say little about the Select Committee as it only issued an interim report and was not significant for former Child Migrants.
188. There have been two important parliamentary inquiries into child migration over the past twenty years by the UK Health Select Committee and the Australian Senate. Both resulted from the cumulative impact of campaigning by CMT and former child migrants after a decade of promoting awareness of this issue in the mass media.
189. The UK Health Select Committee produced a relatively quick but short report in July 1998 with seventeen recommendations. These were broadly accepted by the Government, such as the need for a central database but many were implemented in a diluted form. For example, the Trust's funding was increased to £150k per year but not to the level recommended where it could offer a comprehensive service to any former child migrant who requires it. Similarly, the proposal for a travel fund was accepted but only for three years with a million pounds which provided 450 reunion visits by former child migrants. Clearly, a single visit cannot begin to heal the wounds of decades of separation.
190. The recommended apology was diluted to a statement of regret whilst the proposal for a conference of all interested parties to plan for a cohesive future approach was not implemented. Similarly, requests for further inquiries in Australia and New Zealand were not accepted. Thus, some useful rather than major steps were taken to advance the welfare of former child migrants. If services were to substitute for compensation then this was not a generous settlement as the provisions made were neither comprehensive nor enduring.
191. The Australian Government did not regard child migration as a priority for an inquiry and indeed were considering ways to reduce or end the Trust's funding. Consequently, one of the key achievements of the Senate inquiry which reported in August, 2001 was to maintain the Trust's funding. This report has ten chapters each of which is as long as the full UK report with twice as many recommendations.
192. The proposal for a travel fund was accepted and this was resourced for three years but at over twice the level of the earlier UK initiative which resulted in just over 700 reunion visits. This was a very popular measure which was well received by former child migrants. The proposal for memorials was accepted and each State involved in child migration eventually implemented this form of public recognition, usually in the