

Fairbridge Farm School, Molong

1938 – 1973

Other Names: • Molong Farm School

Details

Fairbridge Farm School was established at Molong in 1938 by Fairbridge Farm Schools of New South Wales, as a home for child migrants, aged four to 18, who travelled from the United Kingdom under the Fairbridge Society. Around 1,000 children lived at Molong over a 35 year period, including Australian-born children who were also sent to the farm school. It closed in 1973.

Molong, near Orange, was the primary destination for children arriving in New South Wales under the Fairbridge Scheme. It was based on the ideas of Kingsley Fairbridge that underprivileged children from the United Kingdom could be brought to Australia and placed in the country, where the boys could become farmers and the girls farmers' wives. Although the memories of people who went to Fairbridge Farm School are varied, the reality was Fairbridge Farm School 'trained' the boys to be farmers' labourers and the girls to be domestic servants. Children received little in the way of education.

Children's experiences at the home depended on the character and temperament of the cottage mothers and the other workers who staffed the farm. Former Fairbridge resident David Hill, who wrote *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and its betrayal of Australia's child migrants*, has written of many instances of cruelty and abuse that occurred at the farm school. He states that children who were suffering cruelty and abuse felt they had no one to turn to, even when inspectors from the Child Welfare Department visited.

In the 1950s and 1960s, as the numbers of children entering Australia through the Fairbridge Scheme declined, the Society invited single parents to send their children ahead of them and join them two years later. A number of people took up this offer, including the mother of David Hill.

To keep up the numbers, Australian-born children were sent to the farm at Molong, by their parents or by welfare agencies. Despite this, the farm was unviable and it was closed in 1973 and sold to a private owner in 1974. The funds and the records of the home and the Fairbridge Farm Schools of New South Wales were handed to a new body, the Fairbridge Foundation.

Former residents of the Farm School have formed an Old Fairbridgians Association, based in Molong. It is made up mainly of children who went through Fairbridge, and has associate members, such as ex staff, spouses and children of Old Fairbridgians.

National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

In 2021, the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments have agreed to be a funder of last resort for this institution. This means that although the institution is now defunct, it is participating in the National Redress Scheme, and the government has agreed to pay the institution's share of costs of providing redress to a person (as long as the government is found to be equally responsible for the abuse a person experienced).

Gallery



Immigration - Child migrants working in the garden at the Fairbridge Farm School at Molong, NSW



The Dining Hall at Fairbridge Farm, Molong

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Fairbridge Farm Schools of New South Wales \(1935 - 1973\)](#)

Related Events

- [Visit of John Moss \(1951\)](#)
John Moss inspected this home as part of his 1951 tour and report
- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)
- [Child Migration Programmes Investigation, UK Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(2017 - 2018\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Northcote Farm School \(1937 - 1979\)](#)
- [Fairbridge Foundation \(c. 1973 - c. 2016\)](#)
- [Old Fairbridgians Association \(1974? - current\)](#)
- [Fairbridge Society Inc. \(1909 - 1987\)](#)
The Fairbridge Society sent unaccompanied child migrants from the United Kingdom to Fairbridge Farm Schools of New South Wales and they were sent on to Fairbridge Farm School at Molong.
Date: 1938 - 1973
- [The Children's Society, United Kingdom \(1881 - current\)](#)
Child migrants from The Children's Society homes were sent to Fairbridge Farm School, Molong

Resources

- Community Affairs References Committee, [Lost Innocents: Righting the record - Report on child migration](#), 30 August 2001
- BBC Cornwall, [Child migrants' harrowing memories](#), 29 January 2010
- National Archives of Australia, [Destination: Australia - sharing our post-war migrant stories](#), No date
- [On their own: Britain's child migrants](#), Australian National Maritime Museum website, 2010
- [Neil Morrison interviewed by Rob Linn for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 25 August 2011
- Rutherford, DA, *An account of the Fairbridge Farm School at Molong, NSW* by D.A. Rutherford; on behalf of the Molong Historical Society. Also titled: *Follow Fairbridge: the founder*, 1983
- Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse, [Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report](#), March 2018
- Loney, Georgia, [Former UK child migrants urge King Charles III to intervene after 'disgusting' Fairbridge farm schools abuse compensation offer](#), 26 May 2023

- Hill, David, [Submission from David Hill, former Fairbridge child migrant: Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme](#), August 2021 - current

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records

- [Child Migrants Oral History Project \(2001 - 2006\)](#)
 - [Visit to Australia of Major-General Hawthorn, director and secretary of Fairbridge Society \(1964 - 1968\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, Class 5 \(British Migrants\) \(1920 - 1957\)](#)
 - [Children's files, Fairbridge Farm School \(1938 - 1973\)](#)
 - [Immigration Photographic Archive 1946 - today \(1946 - current\)](#)
 - [School Files \(1876 - 1979\)](#)
 - [Immigration Files \[Child and Youth Migrants, NSW\] \(1946 - 1974\)](#)
 - [Returns Of Employment Changes Made By Young Persons Sponsored By The Fairbridge Farm Scheme \[School Attendance/Licensing Branch, Department of Community Services, NSW\] \(1968 - 1969\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/fairbridge-farm-school-molong/>