

**THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

**Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to  
UNITED KINGDOM AND CANADA  
ON CHILD MIGRATION ISSUES**

**16 – 26 April 2001**

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## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE DELEGATION**

### **Delegation Leader**

**Senator the Hon Rosemary Crowley**  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
*Australian Labor Party*

### **Delegation Members**

**Senator Sue Knowles**  
Deputy Chairman  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
*Liberal Party of Australia*

**Senator Andrew Murray**  
Member  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
*Australian Democrats*

### **Delegation Secretary**

Mr Elton Humphery  
Committee Office  
Department of the Senate

The Delegation was accompanied by Mrs Pam Murray.



# REPORT

1.1 This report presents the details of the activities of a Delegation from the Parliament of Australia consisting of members of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee that visited London and Ottawa in April 2001.

## **Background to the Delegation**

1.2 The Senate Community Affairs References Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into Child Migration to Australia during the twentieth century. As part of its inquiry, the Committee conducted hearings around Australia and received nearly 50 submissions from the United Kingdom and Canada. Having considered the submissions and evidence from the hearings, the Committee decided that to comprehensively deal with the terms of reference and the many issues that have arisen during the inquiry, it was essential for the Committee to seek further information from, and canvass issues with, a range of groups and individuals in the United Kingdom and Canada.

1.3 With the number of meetings that would be required being too many to be conducted by videoconference, and with parliamentary procedures limiting committees' capacity to travel overseas, the Committee Chair - Senator Crowley, the Deputy Chairman - Senator Knowles, and Senator Murray considered using their parliamentary research entitlements to undertake the travel. The Senators wrote to the President of the Senate, Senator Reid, on 27 February 2001 seeking approval for secretariat support and assistance to accompany them in undertaking such a trip on their own entitlements.

1.4 The President responded on 8 March 2001 that she was unable to approve the travel as requested and noted that the committee may wish to pursue parliamentary delegation status. Senators Crowley, Knowles and Murray wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Howard, on 21 March seeking approval to have the proposed visit to London and Ottawa to be designated as a Parliamentary Delegation. The Senators also wrote to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Mr Ruddock, seeking his support for the visit.

1.5 In writing to the Prime Minister, and the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, the Senators noted that the issues in this inquiry involve a complex interrelationship between the UK, Australian and State governments, sending and receiving agencies, and welfare groups in a number of countries. Issues arising during the inquiry that needed resolution included:

- the role of sending agencies in the child migration process and the level of support and assistance they currently provide to former child migrants and their families;
- progress with the implementation of recommendations from the House of Commons Health Committee's inquiry, and especially the evidence which has identified many deficiencies in the services being provided since that inquiry;

- the role and activities of the UK Department of Health in supporting and assisting former child migrants and their families;
- the process and responsibility in the UK of sending and receiving Maltese children and the level and support of assistance now provided to this particular group of former child migrants;
- the extent of restricted access to travel funding through the International Social Service contract arrangement with the UK Department of Health, and the impact for former child migrants, their parents and siblings in both the UK and Australia;
- tracing difficulties through restricted access (especially by families) to records mostly held by agencies, and progress with moves to the development of broad-based indexes and the sharing of information between countries and agencies;
- emergence of evidence of officially falsified documents, especially during the process of sending child migrants to Australia;
- deficiencies in the supervision of support services, including arrangements for reunions and the problems with counselling, accommodation, and assistance with travel to the UK;
- an appropriate funding mix between UK/Australian/State governments, sending and welfare agencies, for the full range of support services and assistance required by former child migrants and their families.

1.6 The Senators also advised that the meetings proposed for Ottawa would greatly assist the Committee in gaining an understanding of how Canadian authorities are overcoming those issues which reflect similar problems to those being encountered in Australia, especially in the important areas of access to records, tracing families, travel and counselling assistance. In addition it would greatly assist the Committee in understanding Canadian action being undertaken to address problems for the future, particularly aged care and the impact on the next generation, including questions of identity. These areas are beginning to emerge in Australia. The importance of the Canadian experience is that child migration to Canada peaked pre-war, whereas Australia's peak was during the decades post-war. In other words, they have already reached a stage with which we are yet to deal.

1.7 On 5 April 2001 the Office of the Prime Minister notified that approval had been given for the Committee to visit the United Kingdom and Canada as an additional parliamentary delegation. Mr Ruddock had earlier offered his strong support to the Prime Minister for the Committee to travel as a designated parliamentary delegation as part of its inquiry into child migration. The Delegation members record their thanks to the Prime Minister and Minister Ruddock for their support and approval as their decision has greatly assisted the work of the Committee.

1.8 To undertake a series of meetings and discussions to resolve the issues listed above became the aims and objectives of the Delegation.

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## Meetings undertaken by the Delegation

1.9 The program of meetings and other activities undertaken by the Delegation is at Appendix 1. The series of meetings held in both London and Ottawa with a range of individuals and representatives from government and non-government organisations involved in child migration issues proved especially beneficial for the Committee's inquiry. The members gained valuable information and a different perspective to many of the issues under consideration by the Committee including those referred to above. The detailed information provided during these meetings will be included in the Committee's report to the Senate on child migration.

1.10 In London, the Delegation was especially pleased to meet some parents and siblings of children migrated to Australia and hear first-hand of the absolute joy and elation brought about by rediscovering family and reuniting under the travel scheme. The Secretary was also able to further the Delegation's aims by visiting the House of Lords Records Office and examine the records of the UK Health Committee's 1997 inquiry into the welfare of former British child migrants.

1.11 The Delegation was involved in a number of other activities in Canada including meeting with Mr Peter Milliken, Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, attending a dinner with representatives from the Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Union Group hosted by Senator the Hon Sheila Finestone, and meeting Mr Ian Wilson, the National Archivist. These activities provided an opportunity to not only raise awareness of child migration issues but to also discuss a range of other issues of interest and concern to our respective Parliaments. The discussion with Mr Wilson was particularly useful due to the important records and information being sought by the families and descendants of Canadian child migrants now being accessible through the databases of the National Archives.

1.12 The Delegation completed its visit to Ottawa by attending the Anzac Day Dawn service, a dramatic and moving ceremony at the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Memorial on the banks of the Ottawa River. The service was jointly hosted by the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions with the memorial address being delivered by HE Wade Armstrong, High Commissioner for New Zealand. A copy of the address is at Appendix 2. Representatives of the Canadian Government and Canadian Armed Forces, the High Commissioners and Ambassadors of Belgium, Great Britain, India, Pakistan and Turkey, and representatives from Bangladesh, France and South Africa were also in attendance and involved in the wreath laying ceremony.

1.13 While in Canada, Senator Murray took the opportunity by using his parliamentary study entitlement to visit Vancouver and meet with Mr Ken Bennett, President, and Mrs Molly Harris, Secretary Treasurer, of the Fairbridge Canada Association. The Senator discussed a range of issues relating to the child migrants sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School in British Columbia and in particular their current needs and expectations.

## **Conclusions**

1.14 The Delegation considers that a most worthwhile visit was undertaken and that it has been highly successful in achieving its aims and objectives. The members believe that such specifically focussed visits provide an invaluable contribution to their work as parliamentarians and especially to fulfilling their Committee responsibilities.

1.15 The Delegation members think that in situations where Committee inquiries have a demonstrably international focus and information cannot be readily obtained through alternative electronic or other sources, the Government of the day should give consideration to utilising parliamentary delegations as an aspect of the information gathering process for that particular inquiry. Any difficulties in attaching parliamentary privilege to evidence received overseas, which are currently perceived as constraining such committee activity, should not be insurmountable. It is therefore suggested that due consideration be given as to how best this problem could be overcome if and when a future delegation is confronted with this problem.

## **Acknowledgments**

1.16 The Delegation wishes to express its appreciation of the efforts of the many people who contributed to the smooth operation of the visit and who assisted in making it such an overall success. While many people are involved, the Delegation wishes to particularly acknowledge the following contributions:

### *Canberra*

1.17 The Delegation records its thanks to Mr John Woods, Executive Director, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for coordinating arrangements with the posts in London and Ottawa.

1.18 The Delegation wishes to thank Mr Chris Paterson and Mr Russell Chafer of the Parliamentary Relations Office and Ms Ingrid Zappe of the Senate Committee Office for their administrative assistance. The Delegation also thanks Qantas and Jetset at Parliament House for their assistance with travel arrangements.

### *London and Ottawa*

1.19 The Delegation wishes to thank Mr Michael L'Estrange, High Commissioner, Mr Hugh Borrowman and Mr Terry Porter in London and Mr Greg Wood, High Commissioner and Ms Victoria Walker in Ottawa. The invaluable organisational support and assistance provided by the High Commissioners and their staff, including the use of conference rooms for the Delegation's meetings, contributed greatly to the successful outcome of the Delegation's visit. A special note of gratitude goes to Terry Porter and Victoria Walker, both of whom, at very short notice, arranged a comprehensive program of meetings on a subject with which they had very little if any experience. The professionalism, dedication and skills of these officers was greatly appreciated and admired by the Delegation.



## APPENDIX 1

### DELEGATION PROGRAM IN LONDON AND OTTAWA

***Monday, 16 April 2001***

Depart Sydney

***Tuesday, 17 April 2001***

Arrive London

***Wednesday, 18 April 2001 - Venue: Australia House, London***

13:00 Meeting with His Excellency Mr Michael L'Estrange, High Commissioner, Mr David Ritchie, Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Hugh Borrowman, Counsellor, Political & Trade Policy Branch

14:00 International Social Service (UK):  
Mr Peter Fry, Director, Mrs Lesley Austin and Mr Chris Platt

15:00 UK Department of Health:  
Ms Melissa Simons, Policy Development Manager, Adoption & Permanency Project  
Mr David Serrant

***Thursday, 19 April 2001 - Venue: Australia House, London***

09:30 National Childrens Homes:  
Ms Caroline Abrahams, Director of Public Policy  
Ms Olwen Haslam, Corporate Director  
Ms Joan Kerry, representative

11:30 Fairbridge, Child Migrants Sending Agencies Group:  
Lady Aileen Dodds-Parker  
Mr Gilbert Woods, Company Secretary  
Ms Dianna Scott

14:00 Dr Stephen Constantine, Lancaster University History Department

15:00 Barnardo's:  
Mr Roger Singleton, Chief Executive Officer  
Ms Collette Bradford, Head of After Care  
Mr Bob Cook, Principal Manager (Operations)

16:30 Mr Vernon Coaker MP, Chair, All-Party Groups - Child Migrants

***Friday, 20 April 2001 - Venue: Australia House, London***

10:00 Ms Erica De'Ath, Chief Executive, National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO)  
Ms Rizwana Shah, Child Migrant Project Administrator (NCVCCO)

- Ms Joan Kerry, member of Steering Group  
Mr Ian Thwaites, Child Migrants Trust and member of Steering Group  
Ms Kathryn Hutton, Australian Desk Officer,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- 13:00 Mrs Rose Coulson and Ms Sylvia Coulson
- 14:00 Catholic Child Welfare Council:  
Ms Patricia McGrogan, Director of Family Care Society (Northern  
Ireland) and Chair, Catholic Child Welfare Council Subcommittee on  
Child Migration  
Ms Siobhan Clemons, Father Hudson's Society (Birmingham)  
Ms Mary Gandy, General Secretary, Catholic Child Welfare Council
- 15:30 Mr Robin and Mrs Bernadette Evans
- 16:15 Mr Tony McHale
- 17:00 Exit discussions with Mr Michael L'Estrange, High Commissioner,  
Mr David Ritchie, Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Hugh Borrowman  
and Mr Terry Porter

***Sunday, 22 April 2001***

- 14:00 Depart London
- 17:00 Arrive Ottawa
- 18:00 Attend casual function at residence of Australian High Commissioner

***Monday, 23 April 2001 - Venue: Australian High Commission, Ottawa***

- 08:45 Meeting with His Excellency Mr Greg Wood, High Commissioner
- 09:15 Discussion with Ms Majorie Kohli (via telephone)  
Canadian Academic at the University of Waterloo
- 10:00 Discussion with Mr Greg Willoughby (via telephone)  
Canadian Centre for Home Children
- 11:00 National Archives of Canada:  
Ms Marie-Louise Perron, Chief, Genealogy & Personnel Records  
Section  
Ms Mary Munk, genealogist  
Observe accessing of archive information through electronic records  
Inspect exhibition *Australia: A Character So Entirely Their Own* in  
celebration of the centenary of Australian federation  
Venue: National Archives of Canada
- 13:00 Lunch hosted by Australian High Commission  
Venue: Le Café, National Arts Centre
- 14:30 Ms Agnes Casselman, Executive Director,  
International Social Service Canada

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- 16:00 British High Commission in Canada:  
Mr Alan Campbell, Political Section  
Ms Yvonne Rideout, Research and Visits Officer
- 18:00 Meeting with Mr Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons
- 18:30 Dinner hosted by Senator the Hon Sheila Finestone, President,  
Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Union Group  
Short tour of Canadian Parliament  
Venue: Canadian Parliamentary Building

***Tuesday, 24 April 2001 - Ottawa***

- 10:00 Roundtable Discussion with Canadian Federal Officials:  
David Collins, Director, Northern Europe Division,  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
Patricia Birkett, Director, Citizenship Program,  
Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Susan Murdock, Manager, Government Action and Institutional  
Development, Canadian Heritage  
Doug Sullivan, Senior Planner, Parks Canada  
Venue: Australian High Commission
- 11:30 Meeting with Senator Anne Cools  
Venue: Residence of the Australian High Commissioner
- 12:00 Lunch hosted by Australian High Commissioner, HE Mr Greg Wood  
Guest: Mr Ian Wilson - National Archivist  
Venue: Residence of the Australian High Commissioner
- 14:00 Mrs Kay Lorente  
Home Children of Canada  
Venue: Australian High Commission
- 15:30 Visit to the Canadian Museum of Civilisation

***Wednesday, 25 April 2001 - Ottawa***

- 06:15 Attend Anzac Day Service and breakfast reception  
Venue: British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Memorial  
Depart Ottawa

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **ANZAC DAY: 25 APRIL 2001 – OTTAWA**

#### **ADDRESS BY HE WADE ARMSTRONG, HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND**

I would like to say welcome and thank you for joining the Australian High Commissioner, Greg Wood and myself, for this ANZAC day service.

I welcome the Honourable Art Eggleton representing the Government of Canada, General Baril representing the Canadian Armed Forces and the High Commissioners and Ambassadors of Belgium, Great Britain, India, Pakistan and Turkey, and the representatives of Bangladesh, France and South Africa. I also welcome representatives of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Canadian War Museum.

25<sup>th</sup> April, ANZAC Day, is the national day of remembrance for both Australia and New Zealand when we honour those who have given their lives in war.

It marks the day, in 1915 when allied forces including troops from Australia and New Zealand attacked the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. ANZAC stands for Australia New Zealand Army Corps.

Gallipoli was notable for the adverse conditions encountered by the troops. The battle, basically unwinnable after the initial thrust gave way to trench warfare, went on for 8 months - at great cost in lives to both sides. Of the 68,000 ANZAC troops that fought on Gallipoli almost eleven thousand lost their lives. Half those that served were wounded or killed. Thousands more from both countries were killed in other battles in World War I; and in World War II, in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. New Zealand and Australian involvement in numerous international peacekeeping operations has also involved casualties.

All of us here today bring personal memories, most through family history and remembrance, but for some, based on direct experience of war. In respect of all conflicts we remember today those who paid the supreme sacrifice so that we, and the people of all nations, can live in peace. We remember those who continue to suffer through their physical or mental scars; and the next of kin whose sense of loss can never be erased.

The events at Gallipoli are carved deeply into Australia and New Zealand's history. ANZAC Day and Gallipoli is now regarded as a defining moment in our respective national identities.

ANZAC remains important to us. Just yesterday, the Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Australia dedicated the New Zealand memorial at the head of ANZAC parade in Canberra, tangible evidence of the depth of trans-Tasman relations. The memorial

commemorates the joint endeavours, common bonds and long friendship between the two countries in war and peace.

At one level Gallipoli saddens us. Yet it also signifies and shapes the values and ideals to which both our nations aspire: what we now call the “ANZAC spirit”. What resonated for those volunteers on Gallipoli still matters to us today - their individual courage, their companionship and compassion; and the mutual support they provided each other to the point of self sacrifice (what we ANZACs refer to as mateship). Extreme adversity proved to be a unifying experience. Gallipoli defined what have become for our nations the highest values of personal valour, compassion, endurance and sacrifice.

ANZACs experienced another reaction to Gallipoli. They came to respect, without bitterness or recrimination, the Turkish troops similarly placed, defending their homeland with great courage and at great cost.

The words of Kemal Ataturk, the Turkish Commander at Gallipoli and its post war statesman are inscribed on the Anzac Cove Memorial. They tell us that the respect is mutual.

‘...Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are at peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.’

Today New Zealanders and Australians gather at dawn and morning services in every city and every town throughout our countries. Abroad, we gather at Gallipoli, (at Hellfire pass in Thailand, at the Korean Memorial in Washington, at the Battersea Memorial to Airforce Crew in London) and in every country where our nations are represented.

The Memorial at which we are gathered has a special significance. It commemorates, by name, those who died during World War II while serving with the Airforces of the Commonwealth from bases in Canada, the West Indies and the United States. Those listed have no known graves. Today we honour their memory.

There are 32 Australians and 19 New Zealanders named on this memorial. Thousands of Australians and New Zealand aircrew trained in Canada during World War II, a great number subsequently dying in the air wave over Europe or the Pacific.

Take one of those names at random.

Flight Sergeant Roy Hodge was from Wellington, New Zealand. Before the war he was a cabinet maker. He enlisted in the New Zealand air force arriving in Canada in February 1942. He trained as an air gunner and as a wireless operator.

On 3 July he and the other crew of the Stirling Bomber flying from Britain over Cologne, failed to return. The Red Cross listed him as dead. But Sergeant Hodge must have been a resilient soul and he turned up in Gibraltar three months later.

Back in Canada in 1944 his aircraft took off from Patricia Bay in British Columbia on 17 March on an air navigation exercise. It disappeared without trace. He was 25. He left behind a Canadian wife.

Like others commemorated here, his was a life of potential, tragically foreshortened.

It should matter to us that ANZAC be remembered.

As peoples there is nothing that inclines New Zealanders and Australians to war. We retain a deep commitment to avoiding conflict and to the pursuit of peace.

We understand that the loss of every single life, and they were often young lives, represents a tragedy. But if all else fails we remain ready as a last resort to put person and nation at risk - for decency, for liberty, to deter aggression and to secure peace.

We are reminded of the enormity of war by the silent names of those who gave up their lives for a cause and to whom we individually and collectively owe an ongoing debt. These are lessons which we remember on 25 April.

Thank you for being here with us and for remembering them.