



1 March 2004

Senator Andrew Murray
Australian Democrats
19 Lyall Street
SOUTH PERTH
Western Australia

Dear Senator Murray

ME AND FAIRBRIDGE

Some months ago my children, now in their early thirties, confronted me and demanded to know exact details of my birth and early years.

Up until then I had, from feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment, not told them anything of my early life in an English home for displaced war children or my experiences in being sent in 1949, at the age of 10 years to the Fairbridge Farm School in Pinjarra, Western Australia.

After I had told them everything I could, as detailed in the attached Annexures, A, B and C, I gave them carte blanche to research my past, their 'roots', etc.

My son contacted the Fairbridge Society and found, via the internet, details of the Child Migrant Trust and information regarding the Australian Senate inquiry into child migration schemes, in which, I believe, you played a significant role.

This motivated me in December 2003, to draft submissions to the Child Migrant Trust, both in Australia and England. A copy of these items is attached.

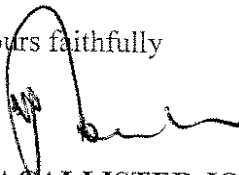
From the English office of the Child Migrant Trust I have heard **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING** and from Ian Thwaites, a Senior Social Worker with the Child Migrant Trust in Carlton, Victoria, I have received several items of **NEGATIVE** information but he did arrange for a copy of the Senate 'Report on Child Migration – August 2001' to be forwarded to me several weeks ago.

I have studied the report in detail and am amazed how closely the lives of other child migrants mirrored my own horrendous experiences at Fairbridge. Experiences that led me some years ago to 'exile' myself from West Australia and move to South Africa where I was, and could remain anonymous.

I would be most grateful if you could review the attachments and advise whether anything can be done in 'Righting the Record' in my instance. I certainly qualify as a 'Lost Innocent'.

The most convenient/expeditious response to this enquiry would be via e-mail, per the address below.

Yours faithfully



(SEE ADDENDUM DATED 3-3-04)

MACALLISTER JOHN TOMBLESON

ADDENDUM TO LETTER DATED 1 MARCH 2004 TO SENATOR ANDREW MURRAY

Senator Murray, an important and extremely relevant fact that is **NOT RAISED** in the Senate Report on Child Migration - a report I refer to in the sick and cynical legacy of my abuse at Fairbridge as '**WRITING** the Record' rather than '**RIGHTING** the Record' is this:-

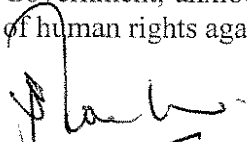
I, and am sure many other former child migrants, were dehumanised to the extent that we lost all sense of love, caring, respect, family affiliations if any, and other 'normal' human values. We were mere survivors.

It became inconsequential whether we had brothers, sisters, parents or other relatives alive (or even dead) in Britain.

The physical and psychological abuse we suffered on an ongoing basis ensured that we become soulless, mindless robots in the 'system'.

That a major portion of funding allocated to reparations and compensation to victims of child migrant schemes is granted to research work carried out by the 'Child Migrant Trust' and similar NGO's means **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING** to people such as me.

A reasonable cash settlement or an entitlement to a pension grant could never compensate for the pain, suffering and humiliation we endured **BUT** it would at least demonstrate that the Senate Enquiry was not merely a 'whitewash' by the Australian Government, anxious to avoid international condemnation for allowing gross abuses of human rights against 'Lost Innocents'.



Mr Tomblison
3 March 2004

9 December 2003

The Trustees
Child Migrant Trust
228 Canning Street
North Carlton
Victoria 3054
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sirs

**MACALLISTER JOHN EGBERT TOMBLESON EX FAIRBRIDGE FARM
SCHOOL PINJARRA WEST AUSTRALIA**

Details of place and date of birth, date sent to Fairbridge etc. are contained on the attachment titled 'Child Migrants Trust'.

It is the purpose of this letter to bring to your attention the fact that when I left Bodmin, Cornwall, I was a warm, loving spontaneous child and I still have fond memories of Bodmin people, who treated me in a loving and caring manner. I can still remember the names of my early teachers, the Bodmin families and land army girls, who took a personal interest in me. I have always had a special affection for Mr Harbisher, the Principal of 'West View', the home for displaced war children, in which I had been placed. Mr Harbisher and his wife were as close to being nurturing parents as any young child could want.

I cannot say the same for most of the people who ran the Fairbridge Farm School for whom I have only memories of fear, anger and resentment. When I left Fairbridge, I had become an uncaring, selfish, fearful loner. I had been dehumanised.

This change in my personality and the character defects wrought upon me by the Fairbridge experience have caused my life to become an ongoing saga of job and geographical changes, severe breakdown in personal relationships and in later years have led to periodic bouts of alcohol abuse.

My wife and two children, who until very recently knew nothing of my experiences at Fairbridge, have been caused immeasurable harm by my shortcomings as a person, husband and parent, the result of my traumatic early years in Australia.

For some years I have been receiving psychiatric treatment for acute depression from Dr Colin Levisohn of the Chelmsford Medical Centre in Durban. The treatment has necessitated occasional hospitalisation and ongoing medication, as reflected on

Attachment 7, a copy of a statement of account from Dr Levisohn, which records my hospitalisation for acute depression in 2002.

The circumstances that led to my dehumanisation and abuse, as a child labourer are detailed in Annexures A and B. Annexure C records how my experiences at Fairbridge have affected my adult life.

As a result of an inconsistent behavioural history in the workplace, (an example being the attached letter from KPMG), I now find myself unemployed and unemployable, in a financial position close to destitution with no prospects of receiving a pension from England, Australia or South Africa when I turn 65 years of age in March 2004.

I desperately and urgently need the financial resources to be able to present a claim to the Australian Government for compensation for the pain and suffering I endured at Fairbridge.

With your assistance, I hope to be able to spend my few remaining years with some dignity and purpose of being, able to forgive those who sent me to Fairbridge and the people who ran the farm school.

The cathartic effect of unburdening myself from the baggage of the past will hopefully help me regain the warmth, love and spontaneity that characterised my early life in Bodmin.

Yours respectfully,



MJ TOMBLESON

Attachments:-

1. 'Child Migrant Trust' information sheet.
2. Annexure 'A' - Dehumanisation by Fairbridge.
3. Annexure 'B' - Abuse of child labour.
4. Annexure 'C' - Beyond Fairbridge.
5. Service Record West Australian Education Department - first employer.
6. Letter KPMG - last employer.
7. Statement - Dr C Levisohn, Psychiatrist.

ANNEXURE A

MY DEHUMANISATION BY THE FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOL 'SYSTEM'

1 SELECTION AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE FAIRBRIDGE PROJECT

- 1.1 The fundamental object of Fairbridge was to supply farm and domestic labour to an Australia desperately short of this type of manpower. This type of labour is primarily of low intelligence.

Even at an early age I showed signs of above average academic ability and were it not for a disruptive change in schooling as the result of an abortive adoption, I would have in all probability gone to Bodmin Grammar School and on to an English University.

When I discovered I was intended to become a farm labourer I was humiliated and enraged.

- 1.2 In order to have prospective candidates give their approval we were given an overview of life at Fairbridge. The picture presented was grossly distorted. When the reality of living conditions at Fairbridge became apparent, I was extremely angry at having been so blatantly deceived.

2 TRAVELLING TO AUSTRALIA ON THE SS ORMONDE

On the ship with the Fairbridge party were a contingent of servicemen returning to Australia after their involvement in the 1939-1945 war. One of these soldiers, a man named Jock from Gippsland befriended me. I was naïve enough to believe his was the sincere friendship I had previously experienced by the people of Bodmin, Cornwall. When his true intentions became apparent and I was asked to perform an indecent sexual act upon him, I was filled with disgust and distrust.

I reported the matter to the guardian of the Fairbridge party who told me to 'shut up or it would cause trouble'. 'The soldier' he said 'had at least done something worthwhile for his country' – a devastating blow to my regard for protective authority and fear that I would be punished, for being open about an intended criminal act, has affected me ever since.

3 LIFE AT FAIRBRIDGE

- 3.1 We were assigned, 10-12 to a cottage under the care of a cottage mother. The person under whose charge I fell was an uncaring, bitter, brutal, bully. More of a sadistic prison warder than a surrogate parent. Among her less endearing ways of showing her displeasure was the full fisted punch to the face. I still have a crooked septum to bear witness of one such punch. That I lived in fear and resentment of authority is a character trait I still bear.

- 3.2 Within our cottage the ages of the residents varied from 6-15 years. This gave rise to a great deal of bullying from which I did not escape. There were also incidents of the bigger boys forcing the younger ones to perform sexual acts and these in an open dormitory.

To report such matters to the cottage mother would have resulted in a hiding from her and the older boy involved. The three wise monkeys dictum soon became firmly entrenched in my mind.

- 3.3 Communal bathing. The early morning cold douche under the scrutiny of the cottage mother under one of a series of showers in an open bay was a source of embarrassment to me. I was not physically well endowed and this combined with the cold water made me the butt of some extremely disparaging comments which the cottage mother seemed to think hilarious. Feelings of sexual inadequacy have plagued me for most of my life.

- 3.4 We were obliged to walk around Fairbridge without shoes. The roads were of gravel, which made walking painful. I suffered badly from stone bruises as a result. In the summer heat the roads became unbearably hot, but walk on them we must in order to get e.g. from the cottage to the central dining hall.

- 3.5 Food. One does not expect quality or variety in institutional food. At Fairbridge the monotony of Fairbridge stew and bread and dripping made mealtime an unwelcome necessity. The adage they will eat anything if they are hungry enough applied.

With the amount of manual labour I was obliged to do, I was always looking for ways to get enough to eat

- 3.6 Privacy in any form was an impossibility. The cottage mother would constantly monitor our showers or baths, a fact, which became increasingly embarrassing, as I grew older.

- 3.7 Inward mail I received would be read by the office staff and cottage mother before being given to me.

Outward mail was strictly censored by the cottage mother before being sent to the office for posting.

The few personal possessions I owned were kept in a locker by my bed. There was no key for the locker and occasionally a possession, normally a birthday gift from a Bodmin family, would disappear.

Any gift of clothing would be confiscated if it did not conform to the drab Fairbridge uniform.

3.8 The cottage in which I lived had weatherboard sides, which did not extend to roof height. The top 24/30 inches was open and allowed rain and mosquitoes to come in. There were occasions when my arms and face were covered in festering mosquito bites. Or I had to move my bed to avoid the rain. The only toilet for us boys was an outside 'dunny'. Newspapers served as toilet paper. To visit the toilet during the night, particularly during the winter storms, was for me a fearful affair. I became a 'bed wetter' and was humiliated by being forced by the cottage mother to parade my soiled sheets in front of the other boys. My bed-wetting ceased immediately I left Fairbridge and had access to an inside toilet.

3.9 'Running Away'

At some point in my life at Fairbridge I found that when the abuse and bullying or physical exhaustion reached an intolerable level I could simply 'run away'.

Not, as some of my contemporaries did, absconding with the intention of getting away from Fairbridge for as long as possible, but I would 'bunk' from school for a day and wander alone and carefree by the Dandalup River or along the old airstrip. After such a temporary escape I would feel elated that I had bucked the system and not been caught out.

Unfortunately this habit persisted into my working life, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

4 Being 'tagged' a homosexual. One of the greatest resentments and insults in my life is having been openly called a 'poofter', 'queer' or 'homo'. A label that stuck with me until the time I left Australia.

This because of a close relationship with Father Lawrence Whent who served not only as priest at Fairbridge but served other churches in the Pinjarra area.

When my voice 'broke' and I could no longer sing in the Fairbridge choir, I became an 'altar boy'.

This necessitated breakfasting with Father Whent in his quarters after midweek Holy Communion and travelling alone with him to as many as three country centres on a Sunday while he performed his clerical duties.

Father Whent recognised I had certain academic abilities and allowed me to use his personal library for study purposes.

Father Whent was, I discovered after I had left Fairbridge, discharged as a priest for sexual misdemeanours with young boys.

However, he never once made improper or indecent advances to me. That, by association with a homosexual, I was deemed to have shared his sexual

orientation is an insult I will never forget and was a prime reason for my leaving Australia in 1965. I am and always have been heterosexual, strongly and gratefully so!!

- 5 The broader community in which I became involved when I went to Junior High School in Pinjarra and Senior High School in Perth were extremely prejudiced and discriminatory against the 'Fairbridge Pommies'. Many considered Fairbridge to be a form of correctional institution for delinquent or amoral children 'transported' to Australia much as convicted criminals had been sent to Botany Bay in 1788.

This had two consequences. I avoided getting too close to non-Fairbridge people in case they pried into my background or I deliberately fabricated stories, which made me seem 'normal'. Invariably the deceit and secrecy led to the breakdown in personal relationships.

I could never understand that in England the knowledge I was institutionalised did not lead to stigmatisation, while in Australia being a 'Fairbridge boy' made me a social outcast.

One of the most hurtful and humiliating experiences of my life was being advised by a well-meaning teacher at Pinjarra High School that while I had the necessary qualities to become a school prefect, I had been overlooked because I was from Fairbridge a fact, which made me unacceptable to the Parents' Association of the school.

That anger, resentment and a host of other negative characteristics stemmed from such rejections added to my other frustrations contributed to my becoming an uncaring, selfish, loner.

SUMMARY

In the above I have described many circumstances that individually may have caused a maladjusted personality. Collectively, however, they contributed to an absolute dehumanisation. I had become totally desensitised to the higher human qualities such as love, caring, sharing, respect, responsibility, sense of duty, loyalty, etc.

Fairbridge to me became a dirty word and I hated with a passion the people who sent me there under false pretences. The uncaring attitudes of the Fairbridge staff have filled me with anger and resentment. For reasons of fear, rejection or shame I have kept these Fairbridge 'skeletons' firmly locked away even from my wife and children.

It is time now for them and the rest of the world, if need be, to know the extent of the abuse and dehumanisation I suffered while I was a ward of Fairbridge.

ANNEXURE B

THE FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOL – ABUSE OF CHILD LABOUR

Among my personal experiences were:-

1 **Dairy Duty**

Getting out of bed before sunrise, walking barefoot over gravel roads in all kinds of weather to bring the dairy herd from a holding paddock to the milking shed.

Being butted by, trodden on and 'shat on' by the cows being milked, hosing down the messes in the dairy shed with bare feet numbed by the cold water and early morning temperatures. Rushing back to the cottage for breakfast of cold porridge before going to school. Returning to the dairy after school and repeating the morning's procedure. Getting back to the cottage after dark to a cold meal of 'Fairbridge slop' and 'bread and scrape'.

2 **Orchard Duty**

Being FORCED to spend school holidays and weekends digging up potatoes or picking fruit.

3 **Pig and Poultry Duty**

Much the same as dairy duty but a great deal more mess to clean up.

4 **Produce Garden Duty**

Every day regardless of the weather except Sunday, before and after school, working the vegetable gardens in bare feet. Spades and bare feet do not make good companions.

5 **General**

Chopping up trees for firewood with axes that were often blunt and/or fitted with makeshift, splintered handles.

And all the above done in fear of getting a thumping for what a supervisor perceived as an inadequate performance.

On Sundays, a so-called day off, there were mandatory morning and evening church services, maintaining the cottage gardens and household chores. In total about two hours a week was real leisure time.

In a civilised society the abuse of child labour surely does not come much worse than this! Of significance is that I am not, nor ever been, remotely interested in farming. My interests and abilities lie in the areas of business or

professional activities, using my brains and not my body is a fact that should have been abundantly clear to the people who sent me to Fairbridge.

ANNEXURE C

BEYOND FAIRBRIDGE

I have outlined in Annexures A and B the circumstances that warped my personality to the extent that when I left Fairbridge I was an extremely angry, resentful, fearful and self-centred young person.

These negative qualities, my only points of reference for survival, were carried on into my working life with the result I lacked the coping skills to handle stress and conflict and to be assertive when the circumstances were appropriate.

I would accept, in a working situation, as I had done at Fairbridge, inequitable treatment in fear of reprisal or rejection or I would put my tail between my legs and run away, as I had done during my days at the farm school. As a consequence I found myself moving from job to job for most of which I had no previous experience, aptitude or interest. The negative impact these geographical and job changes have had on my wife and two children have filled me with guilt and remorse.

I have enclosed two Attachments, numbers 5 and 6 as examples to demonstrate how my treatment at Fairbridge impacted detrimentally on my working life.

The attachments relate to the VERY FIRST APPOINTMENT I had as a schoolmaster with the West Australian Education Department and my LAST POSITION as a Consultant with KPMG – Forensics who terminated my services with them 2½ years ago. Since that time I have been unemployed.

The 'Certificate of Service' from the Western Australian Education Department indicates that I resigned voluntarily despite having a very good record as a teacher and that the Department had thought highly enough of my abilities to appoint me as 'Relieving Head Master' for a short period in 1963.

The Headmaster at Bunbury High School, from which I resigned in April 1965, claimed that I had excellent career prospects and tried to convince me to withdraw my resignation. What I could not tell him, as I had programmed myself to distrust anyone and everyone, was that I had had a series of painful and humiliating experiences from which the only course of action that appeared to me was to escape to a place where I could be anonymous, where no one knew of my affiliation with Fairbridge. Somewhere where I could be 'me' without fear, shame or guilt. So I 'ran away' to South Africa where I knew no one.

Attachment 6 relates to the termination of my services with KPMG Forensics in July 2001. The reasons given for my termination are risible and could have been challenged and proved to be insufficient for the cancellation of my services, particularly as I had made a significant contribution to KPMG performance and revenues in the previous 4½ years. However, as at Fairbridge, fear and frustration took over and I accepted the circumstances passively. I resorted to the bottle for relief rather than mediation and arbitration for redress. I became progressively confused, angry and resentful at being 'used' to achieve Singh's personal ambitions and

demonstrated my frustration in the only way I have ever known by becoming unobtrusively obstructive.

I started to 'play games' with the enforced taking of the anti-alcohol drug (which ironically I knew how to neutralise and so could, and did, consume alcohol at will) knowing, as it proved, it would infuriate Singh.

I did not care as I knew I had 'served my purpose' in Singh's scheme of things and that it would only be a matter of time before I would be made formally redundant.

The title of the signee of the KPMG letter is 'Director' of one of the world's top five accounting practices.

Both Singh and I joined KPMG at the same time to work on the same project, she as team leader and I as an hourly paid consultant.

Within four years, an almost unprecedentedly short period of time in the accounting profession, she (and this is a male dominated working environment) was promoted progressively to Manager, Senior Manager, Associate Director and ultimately Director. Primarily because the project we worked on as a team was very successful and generated a huge amount of revenue for the practice.

I was her 'right hand man' and instrumental in both the success of the project and her ultimate appointment as Director. Shortly after her appointment as Director, which coincided with the date I had completed a 1 400 page draft of the final project report, I was virtually 'shut out'.

The 'open door' policy we had enjoyed for 4½ years had changed. The social and friendly interaction that had broken up some intensive sessions during the long project was no more. I was treated with disdain. No more than a junior clerk! 'Here we go again' was my reaction another bloody 'Fairbridge Cottage Mother' scenario.

And so kicked in my 'Resentment of Authority' and feelings of being used and abused. The only way I could demonstrate my anger and frustration was to 'play games' with the anti-alcohol drug – Antabuse. I lost yet another good position as a direct result of reverting to the warped behaviour I had acquired because of my 'Fairbridge experience'.

These two examples are significant because they demonstrate that my entire working career has been characterised by the warped sense of values acquired as the direct result of my experiences at Fairbridge.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the abuse and destruction of potentially worthwhile human lives must be laid squarely at the feet of the British Government, who permitted the social atrocities committed at places such as Fairbridge and the Australian Government who, by default, gave their tacit approval to such gross abuses of human rights.

DR. COLIN LEVISOHN

B.Sc., M.B., B.Ch., D.P.M.(Rand)

PSYCHIATRIST

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CHELMSFORD MEDICAL CENTRE
107 CHELMSFORD ROAD
GLENWOOD
DURBAN 4001

12 December 2003

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: MR M. TOMBLESON

This confirms that Mr Tombleson was initially referred to me on the 06 March 2000 because of the presence of an agitated state associated with alcohol abuse. Mr Tombleson has been hospitalised on the following occasions:

- 06 March 2000
- 26 May 2001
- 20 October 2001
- 15 February 2002
- 08 May 2002

Mr Tombleson did not only require treatment for his alcoholism but also required antidepressant medication.

Signed



DR. C.S. LEVISOHN



12

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

(This Certificate is given without alteration or erasure of any kind. No Certificate will be given in the case of an employee being discharged for an offence of a serious nature)

Education Department,

Perth, 17th April, 19 67

It is hereby certified that Mr MacAllister-Egbert John Tombleson was employed in the Service of the Education Department of Western Australia in the several capacities and for the several periods of time specified below.

Period of Service :— From 1st January, 1957 to 15th April, 1965

In what Capacity Employed	From (Date)	To (Date)
Student - Teachers' College	1/1/57	31/12/58
Master on Probation	1/1/59	31/12/60
Master	1/1/61	7/7/63
Relieving Headmaster	8/7/63	11/8/63
Master	12/8/63	15/4/65
Resigned	15/4/65	

Reason for Leaving : Voluntary Resignation

Character and Conduct during service : Satisfactory

Inspection Reports : 1962 1963

Teaching Skill	Good	Good
Discipline	Good/Very Good	Good/Very Good
Organization of Classwork	Good/Very Good	Good/Very Good
Zeal and Industry	Good/Very Good	Very Good

Remarks :

Mr Tombleson holds the Department's Trained Teachers' Certificate.

Checked,

D. Mossman

Divisional Director

H. W. Dutton

Director-General of Education.



KPMG Services (Proprietary) Limited

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Internet <http://www.kpmg.co.za/>

Our ref.: CJS/jcb

23 July 2001

Dear Mr Tombleson

Termination of employment

This letter serves to advise that your services are hereby terminated. In accordance with the hourly based contact between KPMG Forensic & Investigative Accounting Group and you, we give 14 (fourteen) days notice from the date of this letter.

Your dismissal has been caused by your failure to adhere to the terms of your continued employment, namely that you take half an Antabuse tablet every working day. These terms were set in March 2000. Subsequent to that date, you have breached the terms on two occasions, once late in 2000 and recently in May 2001. On both occasions you were warned that your employment would be terminated if you breached the terms again. You breached the terms of employment on Friday 20 July 2001 and again today, and when I telephoned you today, you were unable to speak coherently. For these reasons your contract is terminated.

You will be paid out for the notice period of 75 hours and will not be required to return to work during that time.

Please would you make arrangements with me to collect your cheque, to remove your personal effects from your desk and to return your scanner disk and any other property belonging to KPMG.

Yours faithfully

Camilla Singh
Director

Chairman and Chief Executive: TW Grieve

Propy Board: BG Bauer* MWC Blomkamp DR Broom* LP Foule FB Leith TJ Louw* GI Maile WA McKenzie* MC O'Gham CM Read MC Smith D van Heerden* JM Vice*

* Members of Executive Committee

The Company's principal place of business is at KPMG Crescent, 85 Empire Road, Parktown, where a list of the directors' names is available for inspection.

Registration number 1999/012876/07



KPMG Services (Proprietary) Limited, a company incorporated under the South African Companies Act, is a member of KPMG International, a Swiss association