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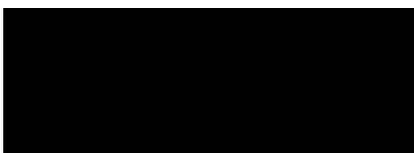
2nd June 2014

Issues Paper 6: Redress Schemes

International Association Submission for the Royal Commission.

1. The Association has been working tirelessly to support former child migrants who have appeared before the recent public sessions of the Commission, and those impacted by the extensive media coverage. We request more time for further consultations with former child migrants on these important issues, but submit these interim comments on this topic.
2. The Association welcomes this Royal Commission as the first judicial investigation into the sexual abuse of those former child migrants who were deported from the UK and shipped to Australia. Over the past two decades, the Association has campaigned for a full, judicial inquiry into the discredited child migration schemes. Justice has indeed been on a very slow journey to us. Neither of the two previous parliamentary inquiries in the UK and Australia has adequately tackled the complex issues of reparations or redress.
3. Indeed, it seems to us that there have been solid roadblocks, especially limited access to records and statutes of limitations, which have stopped justice being delivered anywhere. We recall the appalling betrayal by the West Australian State Government which cut in half already small redress payments to those children now adults whom the State failed in their duty of care.
4. Former child migrants are a unique group in Australia who require unique remedies. In terms of compensation, former child migrants need significant progress to be made although many are fearful about being let down again. We wish to consult with as many former child migrants as possible to seek and represent their views.

5. Many believe that the Australian apology was a missed opportunity to address this vital issue. It also failed to focus attention on our unique and specific needs which do not match those of the majority of care leavers. Our distinct identity was not recognised. We remain very concerned at the crimes committed against former child migrants and the consequences of the failed and slow response by churches, the state and charitable agencies.
6. There are a wide range of issues for consideration under a national redress scheme, and a range of models from other international examples, such as Ireland and Canada, that could be adapted for Australia. It is vital that any scheme implemented does not create additional pain and damage through exclusion and further discrimination.
7. We will be seeking independent advice on ways to secure redress including the UN's attempts to deal with major abuses of human rights. We have supported some former child migrants through church redress, especially those who were anxious or ill at ease with this process and the people involved.
8. Human rights abuses against former child migrants are staggering through their long term impact. Whilst perpetrators of criminal abuse and those organisations responsible continue in denial and cover-up, we are forced to live with unbearable injustice. Historic child abuse has economic as well as psychological consequences that need to be addressed. The long-term negative effects of crimes against us as children continue to cast a long shadow over our lives.
9. Lack of access to meaningful redress measures denies many former child migrants the freedom and opportunity to enjoy the remainder of their lives in the reassurance that justice has been achieved. We do not wish to leave this terrible burden to our children.



Norman Johnston
President