

# Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra

1913 – 1981

## Details

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Fairbridge Farm School opened in Pinjarra, Western Australia in 1913. More than 1,000 child migrants were sent from England to the Farm School after World War I, and another 1,520 children after World War II. From the 1960s the Farm School also accommodated some wards of state. Fairbridge Farm School Pinjarra closed in 1981.

Fairbridge Farm School Pinjarra was the first site of the Fairbridge Society's scheme to bring poor children from the cities of England to farm schools in countries of the British Empire.

Fairbridge Farm School Pinjarra was run under the auspices of the Fairbridge Society in England. In 1983, a new organisation, Fairbridge Inc, was formed and took ownership of what is now Fairbridge Village, Pinjarra.

Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra was established in Western Australia by Kingsley Fairbridge. Fairbridge and his wife, Ruby, arrived in Albany on 15 April 1912 and chose the site for a farm school near Pinjarra in July of that year.

On 1 January 1913, through the auspices of the Child Emigration (later, Fairbridge) Society in England, the first 13 child migrants (all boys) arrived from Britain and were admitted to the farm school at Pinjarra.

In 1920 another site in Pinjarra was purchased. With 3,200 acres of land at the new site, Fairbridge Farm School was able to expand. More than 1,000 child migrants were sent to Fairbridge from Britain after World War I.

The 'fairbridgekids' website has historic photographs of the various buildings at Fairbridge Farm School, many of which were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. They include: Belfast Cottage (built 1921), Clive Cottage (built 1930), Cook Cottage (1927), Darwin Cottage (1923), Evelyn Cottage (1935), Exeter Cottage (1921), Fairbridge House (1922), Forrest Cottage (1928), Glasgow Cottage (1923), Heath House (1928), Hudson Cottage (1923), Jenner Cottage (1923), Kitchener Cottage (1927), Lawley Cottage (1927), Lister Cottage (1923), Livingstone Cottage (1927), Middlemoore Cottage (1932), Nelson Cottage (1923), Newton Cottage (1923), Nightingale Cottage (1930) and Wolfe Cottage (1921).

On 19 July 1924, Kingsley Fairbridge died in Perth but the farm school that was named in his honour continued. From its earliest days, Fairbridge Farm had used media, public speaking events and other mechanisms to bring the farm school to public notice and attract donations and support in Australia and in the United Kingdom. In 1927, the Duke and Duchess of York visited the farm school at Pinjarra, the first of a number of visits by members of the British Royal Family.

In 1938, the objectives of the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra were described by the Royal Commission on Youth Employment and the Apprenticeship System as 'cultural education' for primary and post-primary school girls and boys, and 'vocational instruction in farming methods for the boys and domestic science training for the girls'. The Commissioner (p.lxix) reported that Kingsley Fairbridge's 'principle was that in order to make successful migrants, who would settle down to rural pursuits, it was advisable to bring children away from the home country at an early age and so settle them in a new country at a time when their minds had not yet become

impressed with the environment of their native land’.

The Royal Commissioner recommended (p.lxx) that the Government pay a maintenance allowance of 10 shillings per week for each ‘destitute orphan boy’ at Fairbridge provided the school undertook vocational and general education and training to the satisfaction of the Education Department. It was not clear from the recommendation that this should be extended to girls at Fairbridge but as it was aimed at agricultural training it was probably not intended to subsidise girls. In any case, by 1940, this recommendation had still not been implemented.

After the end of hostilities in World War II, Dutch children who had been evacuated from internment camps in Java were sent to Fairbridge. This was organised by the Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees. It is unclear how long the children stayed there, but newspaper reports from 1945-1946 suggest that the children were under the control of ‘Dutch authorities’ while they were at Fairbridge and may have left by June or July 1946. The 1946 documentary film ‘Welcome Neighbor’ included scenes of the children at Fairbridge.

Emigration of British child migrants ceased during World War II but by 1947 the program had started up again, with 1,520 children sent to Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra during the post-war period.

Documents in the National Archives of Australia indicate that by 1965, the age range of children admitted to Pinjarra ranged from 2 to 15 years old (NAA A446 1964/46181, p.2; 32; 35).

In 1956, with dwindling numbers of children “available” for migration from Britain, Fairbridge started its One Parent Scheme (also known as the Parent Following scheme). Children were sent unaccompanied to Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra, and their parent (usually a single mother) followed some time later and the family was reunited. Fairbridge also instituted a Two Parent Scheme in around 1960. This saw children travelling by ship with their two parents, and then being separated for a period of time. Children were sent to Pinjarra, and lived and worked at the farm school while their parents lived in a Commonwealth migrant hostel for a period of up to two years. An article by Paula Magee records the pain of many families that were fractured by this scheme before they were permitted to reunite (Magee, 2008).

Fairbridge’s family migrant scheme continued the flow of child migrants from Britain into its farm school. In the 1960s, Fairbridge began to admit children referred from the departments responsible for child welfare and in 1961 the Big Brother Movement began to send young men aged 17-18 years to Fairbridge.

The Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra closed in 1981. Many former residents of Fairbridge have shared their experiences and memories (bad and good) at government inquiries, in books and in oral histories.

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

In 2021, the Commonwealth and Western Australian 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

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**Fairbridge Farm School, 1952**

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of nine images titled 'Fairbridge Farm School [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows one of the buildings at Fairbridge Farm School.

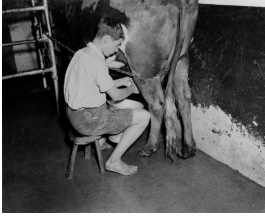
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### Fairbridge boys choir, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of two images titled 'Fairbridge boys choir [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows the boys choir Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra in August 1954.

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### Milking, Fairbridge Farm, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of three images called 'Dairy cows and milking at Fairbridge [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows a boy milking a cow at Fairbridge Farm School.

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### Girls playing hockey, Fairbridge Farm, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of four images titled 'Playing sport at Fairbridge Farm [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows girls playing hockey at Fairbridge Farm School.

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### Sawing a log, Fairbridge Farm, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of five images titled 'Boys at work on Fairbridge Farm [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows two boys using machinery to saw a large log.

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### Messing about on the river, Fairbridge Farm, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of five images titled 'Children at play, Fairbridge Farm [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows five boys playing on the river at Fairbridge Farm School.

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### Fairbridge Farm School, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of a pair of images titled 'Fairbridge Farm School [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows three adults standing in front of a building at Fairbridge Farm School.

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### Plumbing class, 1954

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print as is part of the group of four images titled 'Boys at practical classes, Fairbridge Farm School [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows four boys in a plumbing class at Fairbridge Farm School.

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### Cottage for migrant children, Fairbridge, 1953

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of three images titled 'Cottage for migrant children, Fairbridge [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows a cottage on the grounds of Fairbridge Farm School.

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### Woodwork class, Fairbridge, 1953

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the Government Photographer collection held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows four boys in a woodwork class.

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### Boys at the Fairbridge forge, 1953

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the pair of images titled 'Instruction of migrant children, Fairbridge [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. This image shows the boys at the forge in bare feet.

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### Girls at a cookery lesson, Fairbridge, 1953

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the Government Photographer collection held at the State Library of Western Australia. The images shows girls cooking in front of a teacher at Fairbridge Farm, Pinjarra, in 1953

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### Swimming pool at Fairbridge Farm School, 1950

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the Government Photographer collection held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows children and young people at the swimming pool at Fairbridge Farm, Pinjarra, in 1950

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### Man talking to a group of children, 1950

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photographic print and is part of the group of five images titled 'Arrival of children on the Ormonde bound for Fairbridge Farm School, Nov. 1950 [picture]' held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows a man talking to a group of young children on the boat, Ormonde.

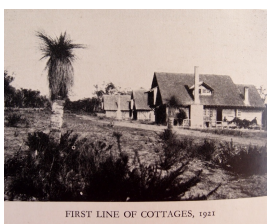
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### One of the houses on Fairbridge Farm School, 1921

**Description:** This is a digitised copy of a photograph and is part of the TVW Enterprises Limited collection of E. L. Mitchell photographs held at the State Library of Western Australia. The image shows one of the cottages at Fairbridge Farm School.

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### First line of cottages, 1921

**Description:** 'First line of cottages, 1921' is a photograph from Fairbridge, Pinjarra, showing three two-storey cottages with pitched roofs facing a dirt road, opposite open grassland. This image was printed in the book, *Pinjarra: the building of a farm school* by Ruby Fairbridge (p.210-211).

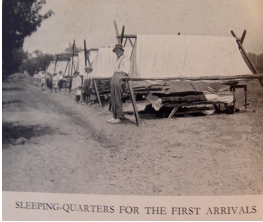
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### Entrance to the new farm [Fairbridge 1913?]

**Description:** 'Entrance to the new farm' is a photograph showing the entrance to cow paddocks and farmland at Fairbridge, Pinjarra. It shows cows sitting in a muddy field in front of a wooden gate, with buildings in the background. This image was printed in the book, *Pinjarra: the building of a farm school* by Ruby Fairbridge (p.66-67).

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### Sleeping-quarters for the first arrivals, 1913

**Description:** 'Sleeping-quarters for the first arrivals, 1913' is a photograph showing a man and children standing in front of a row of open-air beds with small tents raised above them. These tent-beds were the sleeping arrangements for the first children arriving at Fairbridge, Pinjarra, presumably before dormitories had been constructed. This image was printed in the book, *Pinjarra: the building of a farm school* by Ruby Fairbridge (p.66-67).

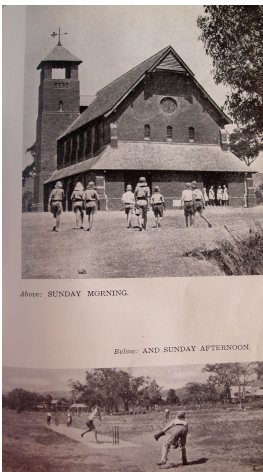
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### Open-air sleeping-room constructed later, [Fairbridge, after 1913?]

**Description:** 'Open-air sleeping-room constructed later, [Fairbridge, after 1913?]' is a photograph showing a three-walled building used as sleeping quarters at Fairbridge, Pinjarra, presumably before dormitories had been constructed. In the image several boys can be seen lying on cots within the building, while a man sits on horseback outside. This image was printed in the book, *Pinjarra: the building of a farm school* by Ruby Fairbridge (p.66-67).

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### Sunday morning and afternoon, 1940s

**Description:** 'Sunday morning and afternoon, [Fairbridge, 1940s?]' are two photographs showing activities of children at Fairbridge, Pinjarra. The top image shows children going to church in the morning, and the bottom images shows them playing cricket in the afternoon. This photograph was printed in the 1948 book, *Fairbridge Farm: the building of a farm school* by Ruby Fairbridge and Walter Murdoch.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Fairbridge Society Inc. \(1909 - 1987\)](#)

#### Related Events

- [Fact-Finding Mission on Child Migration \(1956\)](#)

The Ross Fact-Finding Mission [British child migration] was interested in the welfare of British child migrants sent to Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra.



- [Royal Commission on Youth Employment and the Apprenticeship System, State of Western Australia \(1937 - 1938\)](#)  
Fairbridge Farm School was reviewed by the Royal Commission on Youth Employment and the Apprenticeship System.  
Date: 1937 -
- [Royal Commission on State Children's Department and Charities Department, State of Western Australia \(1920 - 1921\)](#)
- [Child Migration Programmes Investigation, UK Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(2017 - 2018\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Fairbridge Farm Schools of New South Wales \(1935 - 1973\)](#)
- [The Children's Society, United Kingdom \(1881 - current\)](#)
- [Old Fairbridgians Association, Western Australia \(1930s - c.2024\)](#)  
Since the 1930s, the Old Fairbridgians' Association has provided support and information to people who spent part of their childhood or youth at Fairbridge Farm Pinjarra.
- [Fairbridge Village \(1983 - 1985\)](#)  
Fairbridge Village was situated on the former site of Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra

### Related Concepts

- [Child Migration \(1800s - 1970s\)](#)

## Resources

- Humphreys, Margaret, *Empty Cradles*, 1994
- Immigration Museum, *Stolen childhoods*, 2012
- Coldrey, Barry, *Good British stock: child and youth migration to Australia*, 1999
- *On their own: Britain's child migrants*, Australian National Maritime Museum website, 2010
- *Tony Holmes interviewed by Hamish Sewell in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project*, 21 December 2010
- 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
- Grant, Elspeth, *Latecomers: The Fairbridge Society in South Australia*, History Australia: journal of the Australian Historical Association, 2012
- *Child Migration*, National Archives of Australia, No date
- *Child Migrants Trust [website]*, 2011
- Catanzaro, Joseph, *Farmed out to fear*, The West Australian, 27 May 2012
- Catanzaro, Joseph, *Child migrant scandal: child migrant abuse revealed*, The West Australian, 26 May 2012
- *The Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra*, Western Mail, 8 March 1918
- *For the Man on the Land: Farmers in the Making*, Sunday Times, 19 December 1915
- *Nowhere else in the State is there anything quite like the Fairbridge Farm School*, Western Mail, 28 September 1950
- Halls, Joan, *Miracle of Fairbridge*, 1999
- Coldrey, Barry, *Submission No 40 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care*, 19 April 2003
- Department for Community Development, State of Western Australia, *Submission No 55 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care*, July 2003
- House of Commons Health Committee, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 4 June 1998 (Health - Third Report)*, 4 June 1998
- House of Commons Health Committee, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 11 June 1998 (Health - Third Report)*, 11 June 1998
- The International Association of Former Child Migrants and Their Families, *Submission No 129 to the Senate Inquiry into Child Migration*, 2001
- The Children's Society, *Memorandum by The Children's Society*, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 11 June 1998, 11 June 1998
- Fairbridge, *Memorandum by Fairbridge*, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Health Committee on 11 June 1998, 11 June 1998
- The Children's Society, *Hidden Lives Revealed*, No date

- Tombleson, MacAllister, [Submission No 375 to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care](#), 1 March 2004
- Coldrey, Barry, [Submission No 15 to the Senate Inquiry into Child Migration](#), 2001
- Sherington, Geoffrey and Jeffery, Chris, *Fairbridge : Empire and child migration*, 1998
- Fairbridge, Ruby, *Pinjarra: the building of a farm school*, 1937
- [I am your father](#), The Daily News, 16 November 1921

## Other Resources

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**Title:** Moss Report Implementation [Exerpt] - Fairbridge

**Type:** Image

**Date:** 22 January 1954 - 12 July 1954

[Details](#)

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## Records

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

### Records

- [Fairbridge Society, Records \[United Kingdom\] \(1908 - 2007\)](#)
  - [Fairbridge Society and Fairbridge Farm School Pinjarra, Records \(c. 1908 - 1981\)](#)
  - [Child Migrants Oral History Project \(2001 - 2006\)](#)
  - [Commonwealth Child and Youth Migration Records \(1901 - 1983\)](#)
  - [Records of Fairbridge Society \[copies\] \(1912 - 1976\)](#)
  - [John Moss C.B.E. U.K. Child Welfare Expert. Visit to Australia. Part II, National Archives of Australia \(1951 - 1952\)](#)
  - [Visit to Australia of Major-General Hawthorn, director and secretary of Fairbridge Society \(1964 - 1968\)](#)
  - [UK fact finding mission 1956 part 2, National Archives of Australia \(1955 - 1956\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, multiple number series \(policy matters\) \(1922 - 1968\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, class 1 \(general, passports\) \(1892 - 1970\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, Class 5 \(British Migrants\) \(1920 - 1957\)](#)
  - [Files - Child Welfare, State Records Office of Western Australia \(1 January 1917 - 16 June 1972\)](#)
  - [Indentures \(Guardianship\) \(1947 - 1960\)](#)
  - [Former Child Migrants Referral Index \(1913 - 1968\)](#)
  - [Former Child Migrants Blue Index Cards \(1947 - 1968\)](#)
  - [The Vision of Kingsley Fairbridge \[videorecording\], State Library of Western Australia \(1952 - 1952\)](#)
  - [Fairbridge in its heyday \[videorecording\], State Library of Western Australia \(1929 - 1937\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/fairbridge-farm-school-pinjarra/>