

Fairbridge Village

1983 – 1985

Details

Fairbridge Village provided accommodation and training for homeless and disadvantaged youth. It was established by Jesus People in 1983 on the former site of Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra. Funding difficulties meant that the project did not realise its aims to accommodate up to 250 young people at a time, and it closed in early 1985.

Jesus People opened Fairbridge Village in July 1983. Fairbridge Farm School Pinjarra had closed in 1981. The site was then bought by Alcoa Australia but Fairbridge WA were given a 99 year lease at a peppercorn rent. “Old Fairbridgians” continued to use the site for meetings and gatherings. The site comprised a “cluster of more than 40 English cottage-style homes” (*West Australian*, 30 December 1983). Three buildings remained in control of Fairbridge – the clubhouse, the church and the “beautiful house of the founder” (*West Australian*, 13 August 1983). Fairbridge WA gave Jesus People a \$200,000 grant that had to be spent on maintenance and repairs to buildings in the village.

The aim was to bring the buildings up to standard so that the Village could provide “kibbutz-style living” where young people could gain life skills. The goal was to be able to accommodate up to 250 young people, who would be able to “come and go as they wish”. Jesus People stated that “it will not be an institution but a voluntary community in which self-sufficiency is the goal” (‘Kibbutz Australian style’, 14 August 1983). One young person, Gary, told the press in September 1984 that he was surprised “at how free and open the place and the people were” (*Comment News*, 4 September 1984). The young people at Fairbridge Village were aged between 14 and 25. They were placed with one of 12 resident families at the Village (*Mandurah/Murray Telegraph*, no date).

At one point in the Village’s short history, it accommodated 70 young people. But in January 1985, Jesus People announced that it was pulling out of Fairbridge Village after 18 months, as its efforts to get enough government and public funding for the program had failed. There had been 3 unsuccessful applications to the Commonwealth government’s Community Employment Program. Two newspaper articles also referred to the negative effect of “controversial press” about Jesus People in 1984, when the organisation was “taken to task by a Uniting Church official” (*Mandurah Telegraph/Times*, 11 January 1985).

The Director of Jesus People Jeffrey Hopp said that they had “met brick walls every way they turned”. An idea to make Fairbridge Village a “commercial proposition” by turning it into a public youth sport and recreation campsite and tourist destination failed when Fairbridge WA turned it down, as they believed the site should be used for welfare purposes only (*West Australian*, 12 January 1985).

The young people who had been living at Fairbridge Village were all found places to go – some went to family, others found jobs and some went to other hostels (*Mandurah Telegraph/Times*, 11 January 1985).

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Jesus People Welfare Services Incorporated \(1974 - 1997\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra \(1913 - 1981\)](#)

Fairbridge Village was situated on the former site of Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra

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