

## Child migration to Australia

### Encouragement for child migration

In the years following World War II, a popular immigration slogan was 'the child, the best immigrant'. They constituted a particularly attractive category of migrant because they were seen to assimilate more easily, were more adaptable, had a long working life ahead and could be cheaply housed in dormitory style accommodation.

Between 1947 and 1953 over 3200 children migrated to Australia under approved schemes. About 100 of these children were Maltese while the remainder came from the United Kingdom. Other European countries were asked if they would like to participate in the child migration scheme but they declined.

There were over 30 homes approved by the Commonwealth for the housing of child migrants. Most of these were run by voluntary and religious organisations. It was not government policy to provide homes specifically for migrant children; however, the government did contribute towards the capital expenditure incurred by these organisations in setting up suitable homes. Both the Commonwealth and state governments contributed towards running costs. The governments of the United Kingdom and Malta also paid maintenance for their children who had emigrated to approved institutions in Australia.

### Personal documents of child migrants

As the role of the Commonwealth government was mainly that of an overseer (of the programs being administered by the states) most of the records held by the National Archives are general policy files. There are however, some series of child migrant case files held by a number of our offices. You should contact the office where the records are held to inquire if there is a record on a specific individual.

#### Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Books of duplicate naturalisation certificates (children)</u>	1949–58	A1996

## Melbourne<sup>+</sup>

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Maltese migrant selection documents*</u>	1948–61	B3985
<u>British migrant selection documents*</u>	1947–61	B3986
<u>British under-age migrant selection documents</u>	1947–63	B4061

## Perth

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Child migration selection documents – British children</u>	1947–59	PP93/10
<u>Child migration selection documents – Maltese children</u>	1947–59	PP93/11

+ Please ask for assistance to locate records on individual child migrants within these series.

\* You need to know the name of the ship the child travelled on and the date of arrival to identify records on specific children in these series.

## Other records on child migration

General and policy files on child migration occasionally include names of individual child migrants and/or their custodians. Some of these items are listed below. Further keyword searching on the names of the schemes or approved homes (eg Fairbridge, Big Brother, Dr Barnardo's, Castledare) can identify additional relevant files which may contain names of individuals.

## Records naming child migrants held in Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Dreadnought boys – NSW</u>	1921–45	A461, G349/1/7
<u>Immigration – Barnardo Boys</u>	1921–44	A461, H349/1/7
<u>Barnardo's homes – NSW nominations</u>	1937–39	A436, 46/5/7
<u>Big Brother movement, New South Wales nominations</u>	1938–42	A659, 1942/1/3374
<u>Overseas Childrens' Scheme – Tasmania</u>	1940	A659, 1940/1/6451
<u>Overseas Childrens' Scheme – Queensland</u>	1940	A659, 1940/1/6453
<u>Overseas Childrens' Scheme – Western Australia</u>	1940–43	A659, 1943/1/4132
<u>Overseas Childrens' Scheme – NSW – part I</u>	1940–44	A659, 1944/1/355
<u>Overseas Childrens' Scheme – Queensland – part I</u>	1940–44	A659, 1944/1/1134
<u>Overseas Childrens' Scheme – Queensland – part II</u>	1944–45	A659, 1944/1/3895

<a href="#">Overseas children – letters from</a>	1943–46	A659, 1946/1/782
<a href="#">Overseas children – Discharges from scheme and return to England</a>	1945–46	A436, 1946/5/210
<a href="#">Admissions to Australia of British and refugee children – policy</a>	1945–47	A461, Q349/1/7
<a href="#">St Joseph's Orphanage and St Vincent's Foundling Home, Leederville, WA</a>	1948–51	A445, 133/2/40

## For more information

- [Good British Stock: Child and Youth Migration to Australia](#) by Barry Coldrey, details valuable information about holdings on child migration.
- [Fact sheet 147 - Child migrant records held in Sydney](#)

## Information held by other institutions

Child migration schemes were administered by State governments, therefore there may be relevant records (particularly case files created by the State welfare departments) in the various State government archives. Information about these holdings is included in [Child Migrants: Accessing records held by Commonwealth and State Archives](#) on the website of the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities.

Many of the organisations which arranged for children to migrate to Australia (eg the Christian Brothers, Dr Barnardo's) as well as the homes which accepted them (eg St Joseph's, Castledare) also hold relevant records. Several of the homes have registers of all the children who stayed in them. You should contact the relevant organisation (which may have offices both in the United Kingdom and in Australia) or home to inquire whether they hold records on a specific individual.

The [Child Migrants Trust](#) can also assist you to trace the background and families of children who came to Australia as unaccompanied child migrants.

In 1999 the Western Australian Government launched the [Former Child Migrants Referral Index](#) which includes the identification and arrival details for the 2950 child migrants who arrived in Western Australia between 1913 and 1968. The database also indicates where records relating to each child migrant are held. Please direct inquiries to Release of Information, [Department for Child Protection](#), PO Box 6334, East Perth WA 6892; Free call: 1800 000 277.

[Find & Connect](#) is for Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and everyone with an interest in the history of out-of-home 'care' in Australia. You can use the site to read information about and view images of children's homes, get help to find records about children in 'care', or connect with support groups and services in each state/territory. Free call 1800 16 11 09.