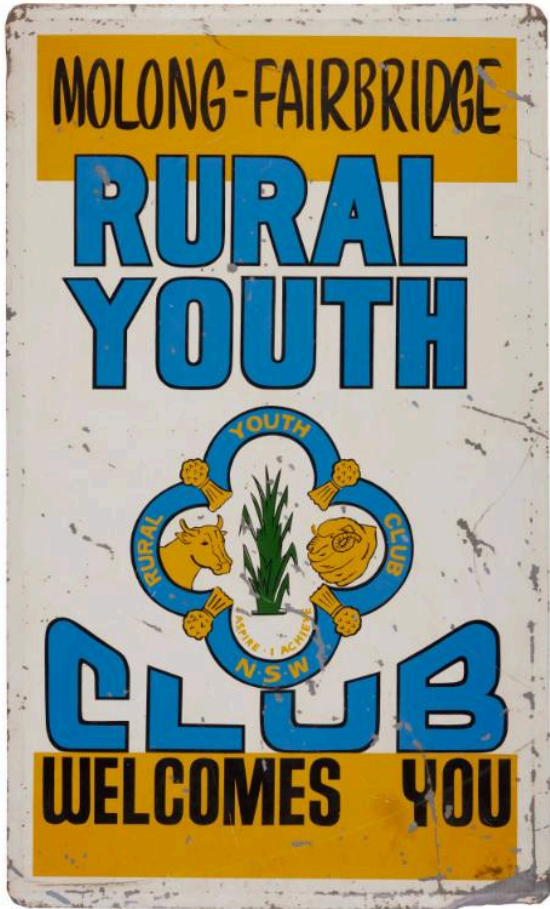


Basic Detail Report



00048094

Title

Sign from Molong Fairbridge Rural Youth Club

Date

1913-1967

Medium

Metal, paint

Dimensions

Overall: 760 x 460 x 3 mm, 140 g

Name

Sign

History

Between 1913 and 1967, more than 7,000 British children were sent to Australia by charities such as Fairbridge, Barnardo's and the Salvation Army. The Fairbridge Farm School in Molong NSW (opened 1937) was one of three farm training schools established under Fairbridge principles in Australia. South African philanthropist

Kingsley Fairbridge aimed to alleviate the plight of British slum children by sending them to farm schools in the colonies. The idea was to remove children from impoverishment, while simultaneously developing remote rural areas of the British Empire with young white labour. Supported by the Western Australian Government, Fairbridge and his wife Ruby established the first Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, south east of Perth in 1913. Fairbridge died in 1924 but the scheme continued. Children lived in cottages under a cottage mother, attended local state schools until they were 14 and then spent 12-18 months training in farm work on the property. Six-year-old Peter Bennett was one of the earliest recruits to the Fairbridge Farm School in Molong. He was sent to Australia from Middlemore Children's Homes in Birmingham in 1940, sailing on SS AORANGI. As the Suez Canal was closed during World War II AORANGI was diverted to Canada, where Peter and the other 28 children in his party spent one month at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School in British Columbia awaiting another ship. They eventually arrived in Australia, the voyage from the UK via Canada taking a total of almost 12 weeks. Peter remained at Fairbridge until he turned 17 in 1951, attending the local public school in Molong and serving his apprenticeship on the farm. After leaving he gained a trade certificate as a motor mechanic and eventually joined Qantas where he trained as an aircraft engineer.