Every one of the Historical and heritage listed buildings within the Fairbridge village Pinjarra (The former home to thousands of child migrants and British children from 1912 until 1981) are in immediate need of urgent repairs and some already lay in ruin (a direct result of lack of maintenance and sustained neglect) and some of the new buildings aren’t that flash either. This, despite Fairbridge W.A. Inc. receiving more than $26Million in Govt. grants and donations over the past 15 years (For redevelopment and maintenance of the heritage listed village)

A SCANDAL BY ANYONES STANDARDS

How did we arrive at this sorry state of affairs that will portray Western Australia to the rest of the world as fair dinkum “Heritage vandals”? LET US TELL YOU.

In 1983 the Fairbridge Farm School Pinjarra was sold to Alcoa (Aust.) as a buffer zone for their Alumina refinery, a condition of the sale was that Alcoa (Aust.) “Maintain and preserve the History and the buildings contained within the village precinct”. In 1983 Alcoa (Aust.) granted a “peppercom” lease ($1 per year for 80 years) for the village precinct inclusive of all the buildings to Fairbridge W.A. Inc. (a charity set up to assist youth) whose constitution compels them also to maintain the History and the heritage of the buildings around the village.

In 1983 Fairbridge W.A. Inc. received from the proceeds of the sale of the Fairbridge Farm School the following sums of money to enable it to fulfil its obligations.

• $20,000 to establish an “Old Fairbridgians grants and loans fund” to assist Old Fairbridgians in need.
• $30,000 to establish a “maintenance fund” for the three most significant buildings: the Chapel, Fairbridge house, and the Old Fairbridgians clubhouse.
• $15,000 for immediate repairs/maintenance to the Old Fairbridgians Assoc. clubhouse.
• $250,000 for maintenance of other buildings within the village precinct.

THAT'S A TOTAL OF $315,000 - A LOT OF MONEY IN 1983

In 1996 Fairbridge W.A. Inc. were on the verge of insolvency and closing down and were “Bailed out” by the Freemasons. The “born again” Fairbridge W.A. Inc. embarked on a $6.5Million fundraising during which they acquired the Old Fairbridgians Assoc. clubhouse on the pretence that they would spend $1.2Million renovating/restoring it. They also took control of the Old Fairbridgians “grants and loan fund” ($42,000) for which there have been no financial accounts tendered since (a period of some16 years) These transactions appear to have been carried out without consultation with or the approval of the general membership of the Old Fairbridgians Assoc. and in most cases without their knowledge.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE?

Since then Fairbridge W.A. Inc. have received over $26Million to “redevelop and maintain the village”

HERE ARE SOME OF THE RESULTS.

• The clubhouse (built by Old Fairbridgians in 1932) is in desperate need of repair and a disgrace with cornices falling off, leaking roof, rotting weather boards, unsafe electrical work, cracked gable and water flowing under the building undermining the wooden stumps upon which the building stands due to total neglect of the drainage system.
• Fairbridge W.A. Inc. claim to have spent $1.2Million on this building, (4 years ago), “I'D LIKE TO SEE THAT”
• The chapel is in worse condition than the Clubhouse with at least a dozen leaks in the shingled roof, lime encrustation on the floor due to bad drainage, broken windows and graffiti carved into the concrete footings at the entrance.
• Shingles are already peeling off the roof and falling to the ground. If a tarpaulin is not put on the roof urgently the roof will simply blow off altogether (and soon).
• Fairbridge house which was built by Kingsley Fairbridge and the boys at the farm school leaks, has mould inside and out, a tin roof instead of the original shingles, (The shingles were purchased years ago and now lay rotting away in the old hay shed next to the ruins of what was once the dairy) having been left out in the weather for YEARS.

CHILLINGLY THIS IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.

Other derelict buildings in need of urgent repair include:
• The store. Weather Boards falling off, termite damage.
• The Dairy. Almost in ruins.
• Machinery shed and powerhouse. In ruins.
• The cemeteries including Kingsley Fairbridges burial site alongside 4 Fairbridge kids, who's graves are now unmarked as their headstones have disappeared and the access road to the “new” cemetery is in such poor condition it is only accessible by 4x4 vehicles.
• The memorial gates. Dedicated to the memory of the 48 Old Fairbridgians who died defending a country that had abandoned them, are in need of urgent repair or rebuilding.

To Fairbridge W.A. Inc. and Alcoa Aust. we say; “So much for preserving our heritage and our home. Have you no shame or respect at all?”

A SCANDAL OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

IS HOW WE SEE IT! AND WE ARE NOT VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT! IT’S TIME TO APPLY THE BRAKES TO THE “GRAVY TRAIN”. OUR HEARTS CRY OUT FOR JUSTICE.