

NEWS

Forgotten Australians Welfare study

'We just wanted to get out and go home'

■ Rachel Browne

When Ian "Smiley" Bayliff and three of his brothers left their home in Manchester for Australia in the mid-1950s, their parents believed they were doing the best for their sons.

Mr Bayliff, then eight, and his brothers were sent to Fairbridge Farm near Molong, where they were promised a good education, a healthy diet and an outdoor farming life-style.

Instead, Mr Bayliff and his siblings, aged four to 11, were repeatedly flogged with a riding crop and forced to do long hours of hard labour.

He ran away to Sydney at 16 without having learned how to read. "We hated it at Fairbridge," he said. "We just wanted to get out and get home."

Now 68 and living in Ambervale in Sydney's south-west, Mr Bayliff is part of a landmark international research project into the long-term welfare of adults raised in care.

An estimated 500,000 children grew up in care homes in the last century and the research project, headed by the University of NSW, will examine the experiences of those who left care from 1930 to 1989.

Chief investigator of the Long-term Outcomes of Forgotten Australians Study and professor of social work at UNSW, Elizabeth Fernandez, said the project was well overdue. "There is national and international

concern about how those individuals were treated while in care, particularly with the royal commission, which has highlighted some of the important issues about abuse," she said.

"We know from a number of inquiries they experienced sexual abuse, they experienced physical abuse, very harsh punishment, a great deal of psychological abuse, high levels of deprivation and educational neglect.

"The knowledge from this research will contribute to refining systems for children currently in care so we avoid some of those mistakes of the past."

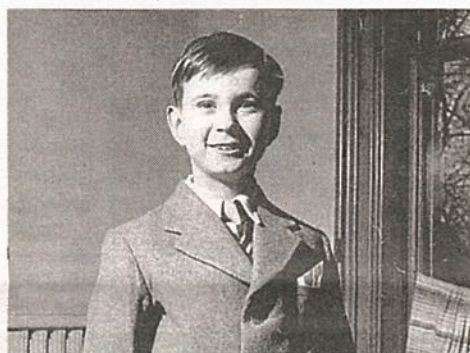
Universities in the United States, and Britain, and Australian support groups will contribute to the three-year project, to be launched at UNSW on Wednesday.

Alliance for Forgotten Australians chairwoman Caroline Carroll hopes the findings will be used to provide better support for adults leaving care.

"There's just not enough data about the lifelong impacts of growing up in institutional care," she said.

"People left care and that was the end of it as far as everyone was concerned but we live with the effects every day, 50, 60 years later.

"We need to be able to admit that the lives of many of these people were ruined by the policy of the day and we need to look after them in their old age. We need to not make the same mistakes."



Ian Bayliff, now 68, came to Australia as a child in the 1950s. Photo: Brendan Esposito

Soft drink sales lose fizz as shoppers go healthy route with bottled water

■ Beau Donnelly

The world's biggest beverage company has turned its focus to sports drinks and bottled water as Australians heed health warnings about sugar-packed soft drinks.

Coca-Cola Amatil posted its lowest profit in eight years, with a 25 per cent drop in net profit to \$375.5 million in 2014.

Sales of soft drinks – the lion's share of Coca-Cola's business – took a hit in supermarkets and convenience stores last year. But sales of sports and energy drinks grew out of marketing campaigns and new product launches geared towards health-conscious consumers. Bottled water was the standout performer in the grocery channel.

The company said in its ASX statement that increased marketing and strategies aimed at connecting with consumers who had reduced their soft drink consumption would help lift sales from 2015, but experts suggest that might not work.

Rob Moodie, professor of public health at the University of Melbourne, said consumers realised they had been "duped".

He said the beverage giant was desperate to maintain its grip on the market by focus-

ing on healthier alternatives to soft drinks, encouraging exercise and selling smaller portion sizes.

"Their preparedness to try and maintain their brand position is incredible," he said. He said they were obviously worried about a consumer backlash "because they're seen as the face of 10 teaspoons of sugar in a can".

Nutritionist Rosemary Stanton said the message that sugary drinks were bad for your health was finally getting through.

Dr Stanton, who helped write the National Health and Medical Research Council's dietary guidelines, said declining soft drink sales were linked to increased publicity on the harm of sweetened drinks.

Nielsen data comparing the buying habits of Australians at supermarkets shows that while soft drinks are still among the most popular items sold, they have slid from ninth to 10th place over the past five years.

Chief executive Alison Watkins said earnings in Australia were expected to "stabilise" in 2015, but it was too early to tell whether new products, pack sizes and marketing programs would lead to a sustained improvement in sales.

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