

Aboriginal Reserves Generally

In addition to Stations, there are a number of Reserves for Aborigines located throughout the State. These are selected areas of land, set aside and gazetted for the exclusive Use of Aborigines and they differ from Stations in that they are not under full-time management. Some of the Reserves have resident part-time Supervisors but, in the majority of cases, supervision is exercised by the local Police and, intermittently, by Welfare Officers. There are twenty-nine inhabited Reserves throughout the State, on which approximately 2,500 Aborigines reside.

For the most part, conditions on Reserves are inferior to those on Stations. On some Reserves, the houses are good, having been erected in recent years, but on others, the homes have been constructed from discarded materials by the residents themselves and serve merely as shelters from the weather. Unlike Stations, there is usually no recreation hall on a Reserve and residents are necessarily prevented from taking part in, or organising, any social functions, even if they desired to do so.

Aboriginal Life and Conditions

So far as can be established, the Aboriginal population of New South Wales is as follows :—

Full-Bloods	235
Half-castes	6,600
Lesser-castes	6,763

13,598

Of the total number, approximately 2,980 reside on Aboriginal Stations and in Homes, and 2,500 on Reserves. In regard to Reserves, the total number of residents increased by about 500 over the twelve months' period under review. At Gulargambone Reserve alone there was an increase of 107 over the preceding year.



Meet Barry Marlowe and Victor Bolt, of Murwillumbah

Labour and Employment

Employment throughout 1959 was satisfactory. Although there was less demand for casual workers in rural industry, mainly due to lower wool prices and those for vegetables, more and more Aborigines have been seeking permanent positions and many were successful in obtaining employment with the Department of Railways, Main Roads and Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board.

One aspect of the position causing concern is the great difficulty experienced by youths and girls in certain districts in securing employment. Another bad feature is the reluctance of certain recipients of Unemployment Benefits to seek employment, preferring rather to subsist on the allowance as long as the Commonwealth Authorities are prepared to pay it.

Out of a total of 518 able-bodied men on Stations, 356 were engaged more or less permanently, the remaining 162 receiving only intermittent work of a casual nature.

Aborigines are employed under award rates of pay and no instances of a departure from this by employers were brought under notice.

In the North Coast district five girls were employed in various public hospitals and one girl in a private hospital. All will be given the opportunity of accepting appointment as trainee nurses.

Relief and Benefits Provided by the Board

In addition to Social Service Benefits which are available, the Board undertakes the care of indigent Aborigines, who are ineligible for such benefits. This assistance takes the form of food rations, the issue of summer and winter clothing, blankets where required, provision of medical and dental services and burial expenses.

Each year the Board provides Christmas cheer for children, the aged and infirm. Funds raised by local organisations for the provision of amenities are also subsidised by the Board.

Exemption Certificates

Where an Aborigine has attained a degree of social adjustment that would indicate that he or she is desirous of, and willing to accept, the responsibilities of citizenship, a Certificate of Exemption from the Provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act may be granted to such person on written application. These certificates, of course, are only issued after careful enquiry as to the character and mode of living of the applicant.

Granting of a Certificate of Exemption, whilst permitting the person receiving it to have access to liquor, does not mean that the welfare services of the Board are not available to him, and he continues to receive from the Board's Welfare Officers such aid as is necessary to help him on the path to independence.

Last year 128 applications were approved, 7 deferred and 8 declined. Six existing certificates were cancelled.