

ABORIGINAL STATIONS

GENERALLY

Of the Reserves for Aborigines under the control of the Board, sixteen are classed as Stations and are under full-time resident supervision. A married couple are in charge as Manager and Matron, the latter being, in some cases, a trained nurse.

Six Stations are located in the coastal area, the others being in the Central West, Far West, Northern Tablelands and the North West districts. There were 2,885 persons residing on Stations as at 30th June, 1961, compared with 2,821 at the corresponding date during the previous year.

An Aboriginal Station consists of a community settlement embracing a dwelling for each family, a school, recreation hall and medical treatment room. The fundamental purpose of a Station is to provide a home and refuge for those Aborigines who would not be able effectively to fend for themselves outside the Board's care and protection, and to train them in the principles of citizenship so as to facilitate their ultimate absorption into the white community.

Since the immediate post war years, housing difficulties have been most acute, and the Board for this reason has exerted no pressure towards insisting on residents leaving Stations, even when their standard of living compares favourably with white people and the persons themselves are practically indistinguishable by reason of their light colour.

It is felt, however, that the time has now arrived when some definite policy should be determined regarding residence on Stations of those who are considered quite capable of mixing with, and earning their living in the general community, and of those whose slight degree of caste does not legally qualify them as Aborigines. Removal of residents affected will then result in accommodation being available for the class of aborigine for which Stations were originally constructed.

During the year the Board resolved that Brewarrina Aboriginal Station be closed and a new site selected nearer to town on which it can be re-built. This was decided due to the state of existing buildings and to allow Station children to attend Brewarrina Public School. In addition, the menfolk will be closer to a pickup centre for employment.

Approval was also given for the installation of a sewerage and septic line on Moree Station at an estimated cost of £21,500 and the incorporation of bathrooms in each of the twenty houses on Walgett Station, together with the installation of a sink with running water in each kitchen.

More Welfare Officers

Safeguarding Our People

During the year the Board's establishment of Welfare Officers were increased from six to eight, in respect of male officers, and from two to five female officers.

Two new districts were determined for the additional male employees, one with its centre at Armidale and the other at Bourke. Of the three female welfare officers, one has been stationed at Head Office, and one at Lismore. It is intended that the third officer operate from Bourke. There are now to be officers stationed in Sydney, Dubbo, Kempsey, Lismore, Leeton, Armidale, Moree and Bourke.

Most of the duties of Welfare Officers involve personal contact in the field towards promoting the welfare, social development and assimilation of the aboriginal people, with particular attention being given to those living off supervising Stations and Reserves.

Some of the more important responsibilities embraced by a Welfare Officer are the obligation of fostering good relationships between the aborigines and the white community and of encouraging and assisting the promotion of voluntary organisations for Aboriginal welfare. Officers are expected also to identify themselves with the public life of the area in which they work, locate suitable sites for acquirement as individual building lots or for use as a Reserve and to secure employment for Aborigines and, subsequently, watch over their interests in such employment. An additional and most important duty is the safeguarding and well being of children and, in appropriate cases, institution of proceedings to have committed to the care of the Board any of those found to be neglected.



We would like you to meet a very pretty lass—Nurse Valda Connors, of Tingha