

*A home of their own*

## BIG DAY FOR THE CONNORS FAMILY

After 12 years living in an iron shack, it was a great occasion a few months ago for the Connors family, now of Inverell, when they moved into their brand-new home in Hindmarsh Street.

The house had been built for the Connors in 16 days by a 60-man (and woman) Christian Youth Council work force.

Armidale Aborigines Welfare Officer W. G. Yates has reported to *Dawn* that he visited the home recently and all was going splendidly.

More than 200 people attended the dedication and official opening ceremony.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Connors have six children, Sandra (17), Beryl (15), Doris (12), Morris (9), Anthony (7) and Trevor (3).

Here is the *Inverell Times* account of the dedication:

When the ceremony started, cars packed both sides of the streets from one end to the other.

But the Connors family were a good 20 minutes ahead of the crowd.

They stood in the first row in front of the patio as the Rev. T. Wallace, asked a blessing on the house, the Christian Youth work team who built it and those who would live in it.

Mr. Yates, accepting the keys of the house on behalf of the Aborigines Welfare Board, stressed the need for active participation by the community in general in

**Over-joyed with the stainless steel sink, left to right, Sandra Connors, Mrs. Celia Connors, Sharon (a cousin) and Doris Connors**

*Inverell Times* picture



assisting the Board to a final solution of the many problems it faced.

Dr. K. Whish, chairman of the Inverell Aborigines Assistance Group, introduced by work team leader N. Stuart, of Sydney, said he believed the Connors would get a "fair go" from Inverell.

He added that the Aborigines Assistance Group, in recommending that the Connors family come to Inverell, were giving the Connors children an opportunity, and would continue to give the Connors family help.

The crowd of 200 people at the ceremony applauded Dr. Whish before and after his speech.

Dr. Whish said the home hand-over was a milestone in Inverell's community life.

"No longer does an attitude of mind exist which fosters ignorance, an attitude which is morally wrong, by accepting the easy path of *laissez faire*," he said.

The work campers had shown a true Christian self-sacrificing attitude.

Their devotion to community service as an act of worship was to Inverell's benefit.

Dr. Whish added: "In recommending that Mr. and Mrs. Connors and their family should be the occupants of this well-built house, we are giving the young people in that family the opportunity to become part of our Inverell community in every sense.

"Their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Connors, have had little encouragement or example to become good citizens, yet none the less they are highly regarded by all sections of the community who have had dealings with them.

"The Connors are a good family and—given help, encouragement and simple good neighbourliness—will be an asset to our town."

Dr. Whish pointed out that the I.A.A.G. had done tremendous preliminary work, assisted by local tradesmen to prepare the home foundations before the working team arrived on Boxing Day.

"We realise that this is just a beginning and much assistance will still be necessary," added Dr. Whish.

"This we are prepared to do."

Dr. Whish thanked Aborigines Welfare Board area officer Mr. Yates for his co-operation, Mr. Stuart, the work campers "and their many willing perspiring singing helpers".

He added: "I thank the people of Hindmarsh Street who have exercised their democratic right to say what they think, who have survived minor inconveniences and who I know will see that, in the true Australian fashion, this worthwhile family, the Connors, get a 'fair go'."

Mr. Wally Knowles, foreman of the Christian Youth work team, thanked the people and traders of Inverell for hospitality and help with building supplies.

He particularly thanked the I.A.A.G. group secretary, Mr. R. Graham, Mr. Allan Boggs, Mr. John McGufficke and local workers who placed the footings for the home.