

# We Said They Were Good!

## Purfleet Marching Girls Star at Moomba Festival

Aboriginal girls from the Purfleet Aboriginal Settlement at Taree (northern N.S.W.) have captured the hearts of sophisticated Sydney and Melbourne residents.

The only "all-Aboriginal" marching girls' team in Australia, backed by an "all-Aboriginal" committee, backed again by the Aborigines Welfare Board, the girls have made a tremendous impact wherever they have been.

*Dawn* told their story in February issue, after triumphant appearances in Newcastle, Blacktown, Merrylands, and Sydney—where they were presented to the Governor (Sir Roden Cutler), the Premier (Mr Askin), and the Lord Mayor (Ald. Armstrong).

In addition, the girls were shown over Parliament House by the Acting Chief Secretary, Mr Davis Hughes.

The girls are coached by Mr A. G. de Voogd, who cannot speak too highly of their discipline and skill.

*Aussies on the Manly ferry as it pulls out from Circular Quay. The girls saw a lot of Sydney (including the Harbour Bridge in the background) during their November and January trips. The 13-girl team includes Gail Russell (leader), Beverly Saunders, Patricia Russell, Francis Ping, Yvonne Ping, Marilyn Clarke, Isabel Bungie, Rita Morcome, Joy Ridgeway, Vicki Clarke, Wilma Morcome, Marcelli Mitchell and Beth Maher.*

From Mr de Voogd came this letter to *Dawn* telling of the girls' triumphant visit to Melbourne, where they took part in the Moomba Festival. The letter speaks for itself and we reprint it in full.

Mr Rex Small,  
Editor of *Dawn*,  
Sydney, N.S.W.

Dear Mr Small,

On behalf of the Purfleet Aboriginal Girls' Marching Team, I wish to congratulate you on your excellent article on the team, and I am enclosing your Honorary Patron's Certificate in appreciation.

The team has recently returned from an 11-day tour of Victoria, where they took part in Melbourne's famous Moomba Festival Parade. They stole the show by getting the greatest applause from the record crowd of 800,000 people who witnessed it.

We recently had a series of photographs taken for "People" magazine and when they come to hand I will forward some for your magazine.

The team has now been in training approximately nine months and I have had to overcome many obstacles in training and to present them to the public.

