



Bill Stevens



Bill Naden and his wife Olga with Mrs Dorothy Gargan



Gilgandra Shire President,  
Merv Armstrong

# GILGANDRA— A Showpiece of Integration

*Before 1955, Gilgandra was much like any other country town in its treatment of Aborigines. The Aboriginal people camped near a bed of the Castlereagh River on the southeast fringe of the town. They lived in appalling circumstances in wurlies, mostly. Yet today, Gilgandra could well claim to be a showpiece of Aboriginal integration. How did this come about?*

In 1955, the Gilgandra area was washed out by floods. The Aboriginal people were temporarily moved into tents at the showground and later to The Pines, a travelling stock-route on the southwest fringe of the town. Here a new shanty settlement began forming, different only in location from the last one.

But Pastor Bill Naden, the present Bill Naden's father, was working towards improving his people's

way of life. He and his family were to lay the foundations of the successful integration that Gilgandra enjoys today. They share this credit with their friend, Aboriginal Welfare Officer Bill Stevens—a man who gives the term "a Christian" real meaning.

First, Pastor Naden set up a Church of Christ Mission at Balladoran, some miles out of Gilgandra. It soon began to show signs of becoming a typical