

The Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs has appointed a new manager. He is Mr Noel Appo, who started on 1st June. Mr Appo has taken over from Mr Tom Williams. This has freed Mr Williams to work on developing the new Public Relations and Fund Raising sections of the Foundation.

Mr Appo comes from Bundaberg, where he was a welfare and liaison officer for O.P.A.L. Under his control, the Foundation will no longer function as a "handout centre." He says that "handouts" given without a good reason are a waste of time. His policy is to discourage drunks and those who go to the Foundation only for a handout. That is not to say that drunks may not call at all. But they will be told to come back when they are sober, have cleaned themselves up and want a job.

Says Noel Appo: "The sort of people the Foundation should be helping are those who are able to profit from help." He gives an example of a man who came for a meal ticket. It turned out the man desperately needed and was eligible for a pension. A meal ticket and a handshake would not have solved his problem for very long.

Mr Appo remembers that when a similar policy was started in Bundaberg, some interesting developments followed. After the initial shock, many of the people who had been coming just for handouts began to come for more constructive help. This is what is to happen at the Foundation. Drunks and bad language will be out. The atmosphere at the Foundation will be such that mothers will be able to bring their children in for counselling about jobs and so on, without being troubled by this element.

Another thing Mr Appo intends to introduce is the practice of getting his welfare staff out into the Redfern-Alexandria-Newtown area to help Aboriginal people living there. He says "A lot of our people don't know what their entitlements are. They need to be told and helped with making applications for pensions, sickness benefits and so on. Also, if you go to the people's homes a lot, you can encourage them to keep their kids at school. You can show them the advantages this will give them later, such as better jobs and being better able to help their parents when they are old. This sort of thing has paid off in Bundaberg where we've got Aborigines in the air force, the public service, as a beautician and as a store manager. This is what we must do here, too. I believe that this is the sort of work that will make the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs the centre of Aboriginal life which it should be."

FOUNDATION— NEW MANAGER

