

BOGGABILLA: A PROBLEM OF MORALE

The most striking characteristic of the problems facing Boggabilla reserve is the almost total lack of community spirit and morale.

The reasons for this situation are confused but among those that can be identified, according to the local people, are dependence in the past on the resident manager, handouts and patronage generally; the isolation of the reserve—it is located 10 miles out of town; the smallness of Boggabilla itself; and the inbreeding among the residents, a factor which has contributed to the present situation where the community frequently divides into two antagonistic family groupings.

An opportunity that could provide the means of overcoming these problems and yet at the same time is thwarted by them, is the Commonwealth Government's offer of a bus for the use of the people. The bus would help diminish the isolation that lies at the heart of the reserve's problems. The lack

of morale and purpose in the community has made it almost impossible to hold a meeting to discuss and make a decision on the bus offer.

Similar factors were responsible for the lack of success in the attempt by AFEC and its Maori field officers to establish a pre-school on the reserve.

The community consists of 235 people living in 25 houses on a site adjacent to the river. Most of the men are employed, many on nearby properties and some on the shire. The local farmers are in the habit of ringing-up the reserve manager whenever workmen are needed, although the men dislike taking a job by themselves, preferring to go in twos and threes.

Most of the people do not want to leave the reserve. Few have moved to Sydney, although about eight families have moved into houses in town. Even the young people prefer to stay on the reserve, the reason being that "they have been

Lilia Orcher and Mr and Mrs Jim Waters at Boggabilla

