



*Artist's impression of what the community courtyard will look like when the project is completed. (Photo courtesy John Fairfax & Sons)*

## THE REDFERN HOUSING PROJECT

**Late in 1972, a Sydney development company bought a group of run-down terraced houses in the inner-Sydney suburb of Redfern.**

Some of the houses were being lived in, others were dark and silent, their windows boarded up and rubbish piled in the street.

When the homes were purchased their residents, many of them Aboriginal, were evicted and the houses further boarded-up pending renovations. It was intended that ultimately the houses would be demolished to make way for factories.

But the local Aboriginal people moved back into the houses and soon found themselves faced with charges of trespassing. Eventually, however, the squatters reached an arrangement with the development company whereby they were permitted to use the houses.

Soon thereafter the Aboriginal Housing Committee was established and the Australian

Government was approached for financial backing to buy the houses and establish the present project.

On the 15th April last year, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs announced a \$530,000 grant to cover the cost of purchasing and renovating the homes. Although the project initially met with opposition from some residents and from South Sydney Council, the company which had bought the homes agreed to sell them to the committee at virtually their original purchase price. The Builders Labourers offered their assistance to the Committee.

The project is managed and controlled by an all-Aboriginal committee. It has undertaken to rehabilitate the houses and will act virtually as a landlord, being responsible for screening the tenants and renting the houses. The rent collected will be used for maintenance and further development.

According to Aub Phillips, foreman on the project, it is intended that when all the houses are