

Aborigines say . . .

“SUBURBANITES ARE KIND”

This letter, which appeared in one of our suburban papers, indicates the interest and sympathy expressed by many white people for our aborigines :—

(TO THE EDITOR.)

Sir.—I am interested in the reference to our aborigines in your last issue.

My knowledge of the full-blooded aborigines is, like most other people's, second hand. But I did some research on mixed bloods in the metropolitan area in 1950.

There are a surprising number of these, estimated then as about 2,000, mostly settled around La Perouse and Redfern, but there are other groups and scattered families and individuals, including several in the Shire of Hornsby.

As far as I could ascertain, the original Port Jackson tribe completely died out, and these are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants, from other parts of the State.

Better Chance.

They give a number of reasons for moving to the city, but all centre on the experience that they have a better chance here than in most country districts.

Several of them astonished me by saying that they found city people “so kind”.

One elderly woman told me that she had more than once been offered a seat in a crowded La Perouse tram by a young white man or woman, and a young mother, living in Alexandria mentioned that white neighbours had thought that her little girl was sick and had called to ask about her.

In other words, they had met with the ordinary courtesy and kindness that decent white people extend to each other as a matter of course, and to them it was an entirely new experience.

Shy and Sensitive.

I suggest that white people of goodwill who come into contact with aborigines should bear in mind that they are shy and sensitive, and often lonely, that they fear to make friendly advances because of a long history of past rebuffs; and, like people of any other colour in similar circumstances, they easily imagine that they are slighted, even when slights are not intended.

Little acts of unobtrusive courtesy and friendliness can be worth an immense amount to them, because they represent not merely good manners, but an acknowledgment to them of human fellowship and equality “long desired and long delayed”.

This is something that any ordinary citizen can contribute to the solution of the problem.

There are other things we could do here and now, besides, but the question is complicated, and I have not the space to discuss it here.

ESTHER WAIT,
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Hornsby.



This lovely lass, all ready for the Summer, is Elaine Newman, of Karuah. Throughout New South Wales there are thousands of young people eagerly awaiting the hot weather again.