

F.A.A.'S 3RD ANNUAL REPORT

This article, of excerpts from the Chairman's Report to the Third Annual General Meeting of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, has been extracted from the Foundation's magazine "Irabina".

"I have pleasure in presenting to you the Third Annual Report of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs. The period since the last general meeting on 22nd September, 1966, has been highly successful for the Foundation. Its influence on the Aboriginal section of our community has extended, its activities have increased, and there has been a much greater public recognition of the role it is playing in advancing the interests of the Aborigines and contributing to the general harmony of our city life.

"The first of the many important events which have occurred since the last Annual General Meeting was the official opening of the Centre on 15th October, 1966, by the Hon. E. A. Willis, Chief Secretary of the Government of N.S.W.

"On the 26th July of this year, (1967) the Foundation had the honour of the visit by His Excellency, the Governor of N.S.W. Sir Roden Cutler, and Lady Cutler.

"Through the courtesy of the Governor-General of Australia, the Foundation was allowed the use of the grounds of Admiralty House for a fete on 3rd December, last.

"Another most important mark of public and official support came from His Worship, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman J. H. Armstrong. We are warmly appreciative of his generous action in making the Town Hall available to us, free of charge, for the Ball which was held on 15th July. Probably no event of the last few years demonstrated so well the increasing integration of the Aborigines into the City community, or showed so excellently

both their desire and ability to mix on terms of complete social equality with their European fellow citizens on formal as well as on informal occasions. Over 800 couples attended.

"The Foundation membership has increased during the year and now stands at 623. This is a small proportion of what we should like the numbers to be and our drive for membership continues. A welcome development has been the growth of the Auxiliaries.

"The activities of the Centre have continued at an increased rate. Over a thousand cases requiring assistance of some kind have been dealt with by our Manager, Field Officer and Welfare Officer. Finding employment for applicants has been a major task of our staff.

"It appears that there are two major handicaps in the search for satisfactory economic adjustment for Aborigines in the City. One is the prejudice which exists in some quarters against the employment of Aborigines. The Foundation is doing its best to break down this prejudice and appeals for the support of all its members and sympathizers in the task. The second handicap is the occupational attitudes of the Aborigines themselves. Some of them have not been used to regular work and therefore tend not to stick at a job or not to conform, in various ways, to the discipline it necessarily involves. There is no easy answer to this problem. Its roots lie in the history of the people, in the circumstances of their poor education and low level aspirations, and in the very nature of their present occupational level.

"In the meantime we hope that the problem can be seen in its true perspective. Not all Aborigines are unsatisfactory workers. Some are excellent, others are learning.