



The debutantes and two flower girls at the Nowra National Aboriginal Day Ball

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY IN NOWRA

For the first time in its history the residents of the Nowra district celebrated National Aboriginal Day this year by holding a special ball.

Thirteen girls made their debut at the ball held at Nowra School of Arts on National Aboriginal Day, Friday, 13th July.

The ball, organized by the Shoalhaven District Aborigine Cultural Centre Committee, was the first of its kind ever held on the South Coast.

Other activities held at Nowra around the same time included a public meeting of the Aborigines Advisory Council on the evening of Thursday, 12th July, and a march on the afternoon before the ball.

The debutantes were presented to the M.H.R. for Macarthur, Mr John Kerin. The official guests included Cr John Hatton, Shoalhaven Shire President; Mr and Mrs Chicka Dixon, who now live in Sydney; Mrs Mavis Davis, the matron-of-honour and also Chicka's sister; Mr Ian Mitchell, Director of Aboriginal Welfare; Mr Bob Brown, an elder from Wreck Bay; and his daughter, Mrs Belle McLeod.

The ball, attended by over 300 people in all, was a magnificent success and was later featured on the ABC television programme *This Day Tonight*.

The debutantes represented four local communities: Wreck Bay—Sharon McLeod, Julie Moore, Julie Ardler, Coral Ardler, and Vida Brown; Bomaderry—Lynn McLeod and Bertha Walker; Roseby Park—Marlene Wellington, Kathy Carpenter, and Susan Longbottom; and Nowra—Jennifer Coombes, Glenda Carpenter, and Cheryl Stewart. The flower girls were Wendy McLeod and Cheryl Davison.

The march on the afternoon of the ball was attended by about forty people. It was met by Shire President Hatton at the Shire Chambers. He addressed the gathering following a vote of thanks by the local people for his work on their behalf.

About the same number of people attended the public meeting of the Advisory Council on the preceding evening. It was the first meeting of the Council on the South Coast and was chaired by the area's representative, Mr Ossie Cruse. In