

MOVES TO BOOST

BOOMERANG THROWING (But Do Aborigines Care?)

Moves are being made in Australia to build a tourist-attracting sport around boomerang throwing—but it looks like being for whites only.

The new cosmopolitan generation of Aborigines has turned its back on the unique weapon used by its ancestors to hunt and kill.

The moves appear to have every chance of success, both as an unusual sport and another typically Australian image to "sell" overseas.

However, the campaign has failed to attract Sydney's modern, educated Aborigine. He is either too shy to join in or just wants nothing at all to do with it.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS?

What are the views of the Aboriginal population on this subject?

Are they too shy to compete in boomerang throwing contests?

Have they really less skill with boomerangs than people of European extraction?

Or do they think boomerangs are now outmoded and not worth bothering with?

Readers are invited to write to *Dawn* expressing their views on boomerang throwing.

Even the art of boomerang throwing is no longer something the Aborigine can call his own.

In Sydney, it is estimated there are more whites than Aborigines now throwing the boomerang proficiently.

Nobody is more aware of this than 62-year-old Mr. Frank Donnellan of Granville, one of Sydney's western suburbs.

Frank, a white man, is regarded as the official "world boomerang champion," a title he won several years ago with a returning throw of 143 ft.

Won Respect

He is possibly the top boomerang expert in Australia, and his long experience has earned him the deep respect of Aborigines throughout the country.

He manufactures boomerangs for sale in Australia and overseas, and has also published his own handbook for learners.

Frank is a strong force behind the campaign to establish boomerang throwing as a national sport.

The problem of too few Aborigines became clear earlier this month when the New South Wales long distance returning boomerang throwing championships were held in Sydney.

Frank was one of the principal organisers of the titles, to aid the newly-created Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs.

"There were eight men taking part in the title event—all whites," Frank said.

"But watching the throwing were more than 60 eligible Aborigines from La Perouse in Sydney and several areas of New South Wales.

"They showed a keen interest in the actual throwing, but they just stood round and did not even look like taking part.

"I went around and spoke to several that I knew and tried to get them to compete. They just wouldn't have it on; they seemed shy."

The title was won by a Yugoslav migrant, 40-year-old Steve Silady of Chatswood, on Sydney's North Shore. He threw the boomerang 90 yards and caught it coming back.

Frank's star pupil, a 17-year-old Granville art student, Sue Griffiths, won the women's title unopposed with a throw of 70 yards.

"For the past 15 years I have issued regular challenges against Joe Timbery, a La Perouse Aborigine who won a national accuracy title for boomerang throwing," Frank said.

"Joe has not competed against anyone since he won the title, and has refused every challenge I have put to him.

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"I believe one of his daughters can also throw very well, and would like to see her challenge Sue Griffiths.

"The sport needs the support of the Aborigines to be an all-round success."

Frank has drawn up a three-point scheme to boost the popularity of boomerang throwing and give the city of Parramatta the distinction of fostering the sport.