



*La Perouse Homework Centre in action—
senior section*



*La Perouse Homework Centre in action—
junior section*

LA PEROUSE HOMEWORK CENTRE

The La Perouse Homework Centre, which is run by the Aboriginal Education Council, has been around for quite some time now. Since it began, it has been staffed by students, recruited by Abschol, who volunteered their services each week.

Now things are changing. Last Easter, Christopher Rutter, who is a trained teacher, was sent by the Aboriginal Education Council to run the Centre at La Perouse. He realized that there were many occasions when *trained teachers* were needed at the Centre. Enthusiastic but untrained staff was not good enough. So gradually he began getting more professional teachers to come to the Centre each Tuesday. Also, he began to encourage the Abschol student volunteers to learn how to teach, and he says that they are responding well. The result, according to Mrs Trudy Longbottom of La Perouse, who invited me to come and see the "new" Homework Centre, is that there is now a lot more order there. The children are learning properly and there is less noise and time-wasting.

Each Tuesday night, the La Perouse youngsters are waiting on the doorstep of the Homework Centre for the session to start. They are split into a junior and a senior group. The juniors "play-learn" by

making scrapbook projects on different countries, by modelling plastic toys, by fitting together jig-saw puzzle maps of countries, by painting and so on. The aim is to give them confidence in their own ability and to get them to feel the satisfaction of making something worthwhile. An interest in, and success at creative work Mr Rutter feels, will be reflected in a better, more confident performance at school.

The senior boys work on technical problems which are graded according to increasing difficulty. For example they make billy carts and intricate toys for younger brothers and sisters. This activity has attracted so much interest that several young men at the reserve, who no longer go to school, nevertheless go to the Centre to be in it. The older girls learn sewing and pattern-making. Later they hope to have a hair-dressing and beauty class.

For entertainment purposes the Centre has a radiogram and a collection of pop records which are thoroughly enjoyed by those who come to the Tuesday sessions. Mrs Longbottom and other parents at La Perouse are pleased about the new developments and the keen attendance of the youngsters each week.