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21 MAY 1965



REPORT  
OF THE  
ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1959.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACT No. 6190, S. 10(2)

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# REPORT OF THE ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1959.

*The Honorable the Chief Secretary.*

SIR,

The Aborigines Welfare Board has the honour to report, in accordance with the provisions of section 10 of the *Aborigines Act 1958*, on its activities during the year ended 30th June, 1959.

## BOARD MEMBERS AND MEETINGS.

The members of the Aborigines Welfare Board are—

- The Honorable M. V. Porter, M.L.A., Minister for Local Government, Chairman.
- Mr. A. J. L. James, I.S.O., A.A.S.A., Under Secretary, Deputy Chairman.
- Mr. J. G. Greening, B.A. (nominated by the Minister of Education).
- Mr. J. H. Davey (nominated by the Minister of Housing).
- Dr. Jannette Finney, M.B., B.S., D.P.H., D.C.H. (Lond.) (nominated by the Minister of Health).
- Pastor Douglas R. Nicholls, M.B.E. (being an aboriginal).
- Mr. Harold Blair (being an aboriginal).
- Dr. Donald F. F. Thomson, O.B.E., Ph.D., D.Sc., Dip.Anthrop. (an expert in anthropology).
- The Honorable Sir Albert Lind, M.L.A.
- Mr. D. R. Howe.

Dr. Finney was granted extended leave from February, 1958, to November, 1958, when she was doing a post graduate year at the Sydney University and obtained the Diploma of Public Health. Mr Harold Blair was also granted leave of absence from June, 1958, to November, 1958, when he was travelling overseas.

The Honorable Sir Albert Lind, M.L.A., who had been a member of the previous Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in Victoria for many years and was appointed to the present Board, has been unable because of illness to attend meetings since November, 1958.

Twelve meetings of the Board were held during the year. Attendances of members at these meetings were as follows:—

The Honorable M. V. Porter, M.L.A. (Chairman)	..	..	8
Mr. A. J. L. James (Deputy Chairman)	..	..	12
Mr. J. G. Greening	..	..	10
Mr. J. H. Davey	..	..	12
Dr. J. Finney	..	..	5
Pastor D. R. Nicholls	..	..	10
Mr. Harold Blair	..	..	0
Dr. Donald Thomson	..	..	9
The Honorable Sir Albert Lind, M.L.A.	..	..	2
Mr. D. Howe	..	..	11

The Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare (Mr. P. E. Felton) was in attendance at all meetings.

On January 15, 1959, whilst still overseas, Mr. Blair submitted his resignation, acceptance of which was deferred pending the appointment of a successor who under the provisions of the Act had to be an aboriginal if one were available and willing to act on the Board. The Board experienced some difficulty in locating a suitable successor but finally Mrs. Margaret Tucker has indicated her willingness to accept appointment. On her appointment, Mr. Blair's resignation will be accepted. Mrs. Tucker is a descendant of an aboriginal family in the Murray Valley district. She has done community service work in different spheres and has attended World Conferences abroad.

The Board is more than an Advisory Board. It has wide powers and authority to function as set out in the Act, and is interested in all aspects of the welfare of aborigines in the State.

As the Act implies, the nominees of the Ministers of Health, Housing, and Education have particular functions in their respective spheres. They have visited aboriginal settlements and families in many localities in the State and made special studies of the problems as they affect their own departments, and the information gained has been applied in the formulation of the Board's general policy.

They and other Board members visited Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station on many occasions and made inspections in Orbost, Framlingham, Drouin, Robinvale, Dimboola, Swan Hill, Shepparton, and Mooroopna.

In addition, the Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare and the Board's Welfare Officer have been to all centres of aboriginal population during the year.

#### AMENDING LEGISLATION.

Although the Board made special mention in its last Report that the *Aborigines Act* 1957 had removed all of the restrictions on freedom and liberties of aborigines in Victoria, the impression still exists that aborigines in this State do not enjoy the rights of their fellow citizens. Victoria, the Board believes, is the only mainland State in the Commonwealth which has restored full and complete citizenship rights to aborigines.

During the year, as a result of the general consolidation of the Statutes, the *Aborigines Act* 1957 was replaced by the *Aborigines Act* 1958 but there were no amendments and the principles remained the same. It was found, however, that there were certain difficulties in the way of the Housing Commission acting as the Constructing Authority in the erection of houses for the Board for occupation by aborigines.

The *Aborigines (Houses) Act* 1959 was passed in May, 1959, and amended section 7 of the Principal Act. It gave the Board power to enter into a contract or agreement with the Housing Commission to build houses for aborigines with the funds of the Board on land purchased by the Board or set aside for its requirements.

Toward the end of the period of this Report, negotiations were in progress with the Commission for the erection of houses at Robinvale and elsewhere under the terms of the new legislation.

#### REGULATIONS.

During the year the Board promulgated new regulations under section 10 of the 1957 Act and they came into force on 27th August, 1958. They provide for proper conduct and control of aboriginal reserves at Lake Tyers and Framlingham and include provisions for general supervision over matters affecting the interests and welfare of aborigines, particularly housing and employment. In respect to the two reserves mentioned the regulations empower the Board to exercise control over persons entering or leaving the reserves, particularly Lake Tyers Station. A very necessary check on the entry to the Station and disturbance of residents by some of the troublesome elements in the aboriginal community outside has resulted.

#### NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINES IN VICTORIA.

The Aborigines Act defines "aborigines" as not only full blooded aboriginal natives of Australia but also any person of aboriginal descent. In so doing it has adopted a very practical view-point. By taking this wide view the Aborigines Welfare Board is able to assist any person of aboriginal blood. It is perhaps relevant here to make reference to the correct usage of the words "aboriginal" and "aborigines". "Aboriginal" is the correct form for the singular noun and the adjective, while "aborigines" is correct for the plural noun.

A survey, details of which will be found in Appendix 1 to this Report, was made during the year by the Board's officers. It has shown that the aboriginal population of Victoria is about 2,260, which figure is tentative and subject to revision. The aborigines are located in many parts of the State, the greatest numbers being found in East Gippsland, North and North-west Victoria, parts of the Western District, and the inner Metropolitan area. Practically none of them is a full-blood; in fact it is doubtful whether there is alive to-day any full-blood who was born in Victoria. Most of the aborigines are half or lighter caste.

The available evidence suggests that the aboriginal population in Victoria is increasing. Large families are customary—improved medical and social services have reduced infantile mortality—and as better living conditions are provided the numbers will increase even further. There is need for further research and investigation into population trends.

Victorian aborigines are all closely interrelated. Although there have been some marriages between aborigines and whites, the majority of them are marrying among themselves.

There is undoubtedly a substantial number of people of aboriginal descent in Victoria who have passed into the white community and have ceased to be identified as aborigines. There is no ready way of ascertaining their numbers and it is not the intention of the Aborigines Welfare Board to contact them because they have assimilated themselves by their own efforts and will only receive the Board's consideration if they themselves make an approach for guidance or assistance. Some of the people now regarded as aborigines could "pass" as whites and become assimilated if they broke away from their old mode of living, associates, surroundings, and behaviour. However, the question of assimilating such families is a complex one.

Quite a substantial proportion of Victoria's aborigines originally came from New South Wales. There is considerable movement to and fro across the Murray River and also between East Gippsland and the south coast of New South Wales. Naturally it is very hard in some cases to determine whether families of aborigines could be regarded as belonging to New South Wales or to Victoria. On the other hand, there does not appear to be much movement of aborigines between Victoria and South Australia. A recent interesting discovery was that several large aboriginal families in Victoria have Tasmanian native ancestors.

The Board is faced with something of a dilemma where white men have married part-aboriginal women. It is generally assumed that these men should lift their part-aboriginal wives and children up to white standards. However, this does not always happen and the Board's officers have observed instances of white men and aboriginal wives living in sub-standard shanty conditions side by side with aboriginal families and participating together socially. The Board has not included these families in its programme of rehabilitation and assistance and it does not appear that there is any other special authority to handle such cases.

## HOUSING.

The most urgent task facing the Board was improvement of shack housing of many aboriginal families throughout the State which has been adequately described in the Board's last Report.

Several hundred more families live in various old dwellings; some in the inner metropolitan suburbs, some in saw-mill cottages, and others in old condemned houses. Sharing of houses is common and leads to serious overcrowding.

But the housing situation of aborigines is not all bad. Approximately 30 families are tenants of the Housing Commission in the city and in various country towns and generally they are making a good effort to maintain themselves, but are faced with rentals which some of them cannot consistently meet. During the year the Board has assisted some of these families who have fallen into arrears with rent, taking the view that it was essential to preserve the tenancy and keep the family together rather than allow them to drift back to sub-standard living conditions and become a heavier burden not only on the Board but on other Social Service activities of the State. There are 160 families satisfactorily housed in various districts throughout Victoria—some of them owning their own homes or in the process of buying them.

### (a) *Mooroopna.*

The Mooroopna Housing Settlement, which was described in detail in the last Annual Report, has been signally successful—even beyond the hopes of the Board. It was the first special housing project for aborigines originated by the Board and carried out with the co-operation of the Housing Commission. The tenants adapted themselves quickly to their new homes and set about improving the surroundings with gardens. They bought new items of household equipment and have cared for the cottages very well. The rental record has been most commendable, and at the end of the year under review, all rents were up-to-date and some were paid well in advance. Conduct on the settlement has been satisfactory.

The whole estate is rented by the Aborigines Welfare Board from the Housing Commission at the Commission's economic rental of 37s. per week per cottage and the Board in turn rents the houses at a smaller rental of 15s. to the families. The Board's rental is within the capacity of the aboriginal tenants to pay—the Board taking the view that if the families are to be educated to the advantages of decent and habitable housing their rehabilitation must not be prejudiced by high rents.

The Mooroopna experiment has proved that regardless of their previous conditions the tenants' response to new housing has been immediate and continuous and a very potent factor in the acceptance of the settlement's children in the schools and their parents in the general life of the town. Although the new houses have been occupied just over twelve months, one young family has already accumulated the deposit and bought and moved out into a Housing Commission home in the town. Another is to follow shortly and several others are keen to progress to town houses and will be given every encouragement to do so as vacancies occur. As a family vacates, another is moved in from a river shack which, in turn, is demolished when vacant.

Simultaneously with the development of the new housing estate the Lands Department has given the Board control and management of the reserve on the river-bank between Mooroopna and Shepparton where aborigines have previously congregated in their many shack dwellings. The Board may now demolish shacks on this area as families vacate and by a system of permits and the co-operation of the local Police prevent any further buildings being erected and control casual camping. It has, therefore, put into practice at Mooroopna the policy of control of indiscriminate camping referred to in the last Report. Consequently, there has been a very substantial clean-up of the river-bank since the new settlement was built. At the end of June there were only five shack dwellings left of the thirty-two which were originally dispersed over this area, occupied by families who were permanent local residents. The effective supervision of both the settlement and the river-bank by the Board's local part-time officer has reduced the number of casual visitors to the locality with their attendant problems.

The new housing settlement, aptly named "Rumbalara" (end of the rainbow), signifies the brightest spot in the family life of its occupiers.

*(b) Robinvale.*

The next settlement will be built at Robinvale where Crown lands within the town's ultimate boundaries have been set aside for the purpose. Twelve concrete houses similar to those at Mooroopna are proposed with improvements in design and equipment. The Housing Commission will again be the Constructing Authority. Instead of a community settlement as at Mooroopna, Robinvale houses will be set on fenced allotments which will give the tenants an individual sense of responsibility over their own blocks. In these houses a stainless steel sink in the kitchen is added. There is more room area and the windows have been changed to metal double-hung frames in lieu of the casement type. The stove has been located in a central position in the kitchen-living room to give more bench space, and walls and roof design have been altered. A combined septic tank installation will provide sewerage for all twelve cottages. Approval has been given for erection of the houses which has been delayed pending the development by the Housing Commission of a new light-weight type of concrete, but the houses are scheduled for completion by the end of 1959. The land is treeless at present but a programme of tree planting is proposed.

*Future Plans.*

Following the completion of Robinvale Settlement the Board has approved the erection of six houses at Dimboola and eight at Orbost. In both towns the houses will be erected on town allotments as part of the general town community. The houses will be of similar design and construction to those at Robinvale. At Dimboola there are three cottages in the river-bank area which have been erected by voluntary effort. They have not been fully completed and they lack amenities. The Board is considering effecting improvements. There is a large aboriginal population in the Orbost district living under sub-standard conditions. The eight houses proposed will re-house some of these families and possibly provide accommodation for one or two families from Lake Tyers Station. Both of these projects are expected to be completed prior to 30th June, 1960.

*Country Women's Association Assistance.*

The Country Women's Association decided during the year to devote its Thanksgiving Fund for 1958 to Aboriginal Welfare and suggested that a house should be provided for an aboriginal family. The Board has gratefully accepted the offer and the house will be

erected on a block of land in Drouin, sold to the Board at a concession price by a Drouin resident on condition that a house for an aboriginal family was to be built on it. The Country Women's Association's donation will amount to approximately £1,465. The Board will contribute the balance of the cost of the house which will be a three-bedroom unit of standard Housing Commission design. The Board acknowledges with appreciation this fine effort of the Country Women's Association and will be prepared to supplement similar contributions for housing or practical welfare from any other source.

#### *General.*

Two unoccupied railway houses, one at Rokeby and the other at Neerim South, were purchased from the Railways Commissioners at reasonable cost. They originally housed railway employees on the Warragul to Noojee line (now closed) and it was uneconomical to move them for railway use elsewhere.

An aboriginal and his wife and seven children have been moved into the Neerim South house from a dilapidated shack at Jackson's Track, where the nearest school was several miles away and the children were constantly ill. The rent is reasonable and casual local employment available. The response of this family to better housing has been immediate and remarkable. The children's health has improved greatly and five of them are regular attenders at the local school.

An aboriginal with his wife and children from Lake Tyers Station is to be transferred at his own request to the house at Rokeby where work will also be offering. Both of these families have the opportunity of absorption into the community. There were other shack dwellings in the Jackson's Track area which have now been demolished and financial assistance has been given to the Neerim South Branch of the Aborigines Advancement League to provide more satisfactory temporary accommodation nearer Drouin township for their occupiers.

#### *Needs of Other Districts.*

In the township of Nowa Nowa where aborigines are employed in local timber mills, and living in unsatisfactory accommodation, three allotments of Crown land have been obtained and it is proposed to move cottages from Lake Tyers and to add a washhouse, bathroom, and kitchen amenities. They will fill an urgent requirement in this town. Other allotments have been secured at Waygara for the same purpose.

In Lakes Entrance district from time to time a varying number of aboriginal families live in primitive conditions. A large proportion of the population here, however, is itinerant and the Board is considering how best the families can be housed.

Barmah district has about fourteen families (permanent residents) in poor housing. Work is available for the menfolk but there are few opportunities for youths and girls. For that reason the Board has deferred a housing project there as it may be more desirable to erect houses in larger adjacent towns such as Echuca and Nathalia where amenities and employment opportunities are better. There are, however, strong sentimental reasons why these families remain at Barmah, which is adjacent to the old Cumeroogunja Aboriginal Station in New South Wales (now closed).

For the same reason about ten aboriginal families in Heywood district prefer to remain in unsatisfactory conditions because they had their origins in the now defunct Lake Condah Mission nearby. Employment opportunities here are also limited. The future of both these settlements is receiving the Board's consideration.

Included in the Board's long-range plans are Swan Hill, Echuca, Warrnambool, and Korumburra. In or adjacent to each place there are aborigines who are permanent residents but have no satisfactory abodes.

At a later stage the problem of housing aboriginal pensioners will arise because elderly aborigines, like their white fellow citizens, prefer their own accommodation to sharing with relatives.

The principal problem in formulating an overall housing programme is that for the most part aboriginal families, because of habit or seasonal work or some sentimental reason, have chosen places to live where employment and other opportunities are lacking. This poses the question whether the Board should adopt an active policy of rehousing aboriginal families in new districts. The Board has no power to dictate to them where they shall

live, therefore it would have to rely for the success of any such scheme on the full co-operation of the families themselves. There is no certainty that they would take kindly to a programme of displacement.

#### *Finance.*

The principal factor impeding an all-out drive for improvement of aboriginal housing is lack of finance. If much progress is to be made more funds than are at present allocated will be needed. With sufficient money the Board could embark upon several projects and at the same time consider a system of housing loans on similar lines to other States. It is estimated that 200 new houses are needed immediately to house families living in sub-standard conditions throughout the State. They would go a long way toward rehabilitation of the majority of the Victorian aboriginal population. While the Board is conscious of the clamour for more funds to carry out urgent public works and services and of the limitation of moneys available, it points out that generally aboriginal housing throughout the State is undoubtedly of the lowest standard of all poor housing and large families of children are being brought up under these conditions, many of them having been placed under the care of hospitals and welfare departments.

The Mooroopna housing experiment has already demonstrated the effectiveness of good housing in raising the standards of living of its aboriginal tenants. If funds are available the Board could go a long way toward removal of many of its existing problems.

#### LAKE TYERS ABORIGINAL STATION.

As at 30th June, 1959, the population of Lake Tyers was 156 (adults, 70 ; children, 86), compared with 198 (adults, 87 ; children, 111) at the corresponding time last year.

During the year under review the Board adopted the following principles as a general policy for the future of the Station :—

- (1) Lake Tyers Aboriginal Reserve will be retained for the benefit of aborigines ; it is not proposed to dispose of it or lease it.
- (2) Able-bodied aborigines who are capable of working and becoming self-supporting will be given opportunities and encouragement to leave the Station when alternative housing is provided for them. It is not proposed to cast families adrift from the Station and expect them to adopt the conventional way of life immediately. Life on the Station will be regarded as a period of preparation and training to equip families for adjustment to living elsewhere. Problems akin to those of a slum clearance project are likely to be encountered in implementing this plan because Lake Tyers residents, like their fellow citizens in reclamation areas, will be reluctant to leave their old houses and commence a new life elsewhere.
- (3) In the long-range view the Station will ultimately become a refuge for aged and infirm aborigines. The Board cannot see a healthy future for the younger able-bodied people while they remain at Lake Tyers. It is entirely in their interest that they become accustomed to a normal way of life—working and living among the general community.
- (4) Farming will be continued at an improved standard in order to supply produce required for use on the Station and also to train aborigines who may wish to follow farming pursuits.

This policy is regarded as flexible and subject to revision in the light of experience.

It has been suggested that the Station should be developed along the lines of a co-operative farming venture and that by giving aborigines responsibility and a stake in their own future, a revolution would take place. This involves the continuation and maintenance indefinitely of a segregated community, isolated physically and socially—and does not accord with the Board's functions under the Act.

During the year the Board has taken certain action to improve conditions of life on Lake Tyers, and to prepare the residents for life away from the Station.

Special attention has been given to the health of the Station residents, particularly of the younger children.

A new ration scale has been recommended by the Board's Health Member, Dr. J. Finney, and introduced as a guide to the provision of a satisfactory diet. Local contracts have been entered into for purchase of vegetables and fruit to supplement the Station produce and for a regular and continuous supply of butter and eggs.

The children's ration scale has been supplemented by continuous supplies of canned infant foods.

Through the Department of Health and the Tambo Shire Council arrangements were made for an Infant Welfare Sister to visit the Station for a half-day fortnightly.

From the Bairnsdale Medical Group the Board retains a Medical Officer who visits the Station monthly, and consults frequently in his surgery or by telephone. Dr. L. Clay, of Bairnsdale, was Medical Officer for the first half of the year and he handed over to Dr. S. E. Reid on 1st February, 1959. **Their work is appreciated by the Board.**

Medical surveys have been conducted at Lake Tyers during the year. These included Mantoux tests by a team from the University Medical School, a round-worm survey by the Department of Health, and a detailed examination of school children by a School Medical Officer.

Hitherto, except in the most serious cases, sick aborigines at Lake Tyers were attended at the Station Hospital, and babies were born there also. Now the Station Hospital is used merely as a sick bay for minor cases and all serious illnesses and confinements are handled at the Bairnsdale District Hospital under direct medical supervision and the Board pays the hospital 28s. per day for hospitalization of aborigines from the Station.

It is proposed to replace the present unsatisfactory Treatment Room in the next twelve months.

In past years there has been insufficient expenditure on the maintenance of the aborigines' cottages and they have tended to become neglected.

A programme of improvement of living quarters for the families on the Station has been commenced. An experienced maintenance man has been appointed to renovate and repair the Station cottages and he is assisted by a team of aboriginal workmen who are being trained in painting and simpler building practices as they work. The first group of renovated cottages has been completed but the rate of progress has not been up to expectations and the Board may have to seek some more expeditious method. New stoves and food cupboards will be installed.

The Board has enabled aborigines to obtain at very low cost furniture and bedding for their homes.

Aborigines' cottages have been lighted by candles or lamps in the past. Arrangements are being made for electric lighting and power to be supplied to each cottage. Additional street lighting will also be provided.

**Laundry and bathing facilities have been inadequate.** A community bath-house which is some distance from the aborigines' cottages has been the only bathing facility. The Board's objective is to provide a combined laundry and bathroom ultimately to each cottage as soon as a satisfactory water supply can be assured. As a first instalment this will be done in ten of the cottages which are most likely to remain in the ultimate long-range plan. In the meantime, improvements to the bath-house and shower facilities have been made.

**The Board runs a herd of 260 cattle.** Dairy cattle supply the Station's milk requirements, and beef cattle are slaughtered for consumption on the Station. The herd is being built up with a view to the sale of beef cattle and steps have been taken to improve the quality of the stock. Pastures have been improved and a surplus of hay has been sold. New farming equipment has been provided.

Some vegetable crops were grown during the year, but a dry summer and the limited water supply created difficulties in this direction.

The Board intends to build a new milking shed and equip it with milking machines to replace the present shed and outmoded hand milking procedure.

Lake Tyers is not regarded as being self-supporting but it is believed that more food can be produced. For instance, a poultry farm could be established and operated by the aborigines themselves with a little guidance from the staff and additional vegetables could be grown.



Education at Lake Tyers is the responsibility of the Department of Education. There is a State School where special classes are conducted. The attendance is good but the children are educationally retarded and there is a lack of parental example and co-operation. The Psychology Branch of the Department of Education has submitted a number of practical suggestions on how educational standards might be improved.

Accommodation for assistant teachers at the school is a recurring problem because of the Station's isolation. Consideration is being given to the erection of a special flat for a teacher.

The Board considers it would be desirable to establish a pre-school centre to introduce the children as early as possible to habits of health and hygiene, and to provide a basis for later formal education. By participating and co-operating in the conduct of the centre through a roster system, the mothers of the children would learn much which would be of benefit in the upbringing of their children. The Board has been somewhat deterred by the apparent difficulty of obtaining a trained worker for such a pre-school centre, and also by the need to provide additional equipment; however, it is to be hoped that during the forthcoming year these difficulties can be overcome.

There is great scope for basic adult education at Lake Tyers, particularly in matters of social behaviour, hygiene, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

It is proposed to purchase a library for the residents, and to initiate regular programmes of documentary films.

The Board is endeavouring to foster some club activities. It would like to see Brownie and Cub Packs and Scouting started for the children, Country Women's Association branch for the women, and possibly hobby clubs for the men.

Action has been taken to revive interest in sporting activities. Entertainment films are shown fortnightly.

The Station Chaplain is the Reverend M. F. Green, Rector of Lakes Entrance, who is assisted by Deaconess Nancy Drew, of Nowa Nowa, and Mr. H. C. Hendrie, of Toorloo. Regular services are held at the Station church; Sunday school, religious instruction at school, and home visits are carried out by the Chaplain and his assistants.

The Board does not permit general visiting by tourists to the Station because it would be likely to prejudice the personal privacy of the residents. Visitors with a scientific or welfare interest are, however, admitted by special permit on application to the Board.

A system of admission to the settlement by permits has been instituted and is operating successfully. Aborigines wishing to move there are required to apply to the Board for a permit. This system enables the Board to exercise control over the entry of people into the Station. In the past, some aborigines have entered illegally and lived "underground", causing trouble and dissension among the residents.

The Board is pleased to report that morale and discipline on the Station has improved during the year. However, there is still room for improvement, and the Board is anxious to see the aborigines develop a pride in life and an interest in their own affairs, so that they will be able to take a greater part in the conduct of their settlement and to make decisions for themselves.

Mr. R. L. Rule retired from the Station on 30th September, 1958, after twenty-three years' service—twelve of which were spent as Sub-Manager and eleven as Manager. Mrs. H. Rule, who had been the Station's Matron for eleven years, retired on 15th October, 1958. They both rendered excellent service to the Board and to the aboriginal population of East Gippsland on and off the Station. Both of them dedicated a substantial period of their lives to the well-being of the aboriginal population.

At a specially convened meeting of the Station residents on 26th September, 1958, representatives of the Board and of the residents expressed appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Rule for services rendered.

Mr. H. W. McDonald commenced duty as Manager on 8th January, 1959.

Mrs. M. Miles succeeded Mrs. Rule as Matron and Mrs. McDonald, qualified in nursing, was appointed Assistant Matron.

### FRAMLINGHAM SETTLEMENT.

Framlingham Reserve is situated about 14 miles from Warrnambool; its total area being 586 acres. There are thirteen cottages—some very old—each standing on approximately a 10-acre block, a State school, school residence, and a church.

On 30th June, 1959, the population of the reserve was 90.

For many years a voluntary committee of district residents managed the settlement and received a Government subsidy to assist funds raised locally. The present Board has continued the subsidy and on 17th April, 1959, on the recommendation of the Board, the Government appointed the Framlingham Welfare Committee as a local committee under the provisions of Section 9 of the Act.

The Committee manages the settlement generally, collects the rent of the cottages and keeps them in repair and effects various improvements. It deals with local aboriginal problems, arranges employment and carries out local social welfare work. The Board and the Committee have conferred with a view to defining a policy for the future of the Station, particularly the better farming land which has been divided into 10-acre blocks, each with a cottage.

Employment, water supply, disposition of housing, and a suggested redistribution of the reserve land for farming are problems on which the Board proposes to confer with the Local Committee.

### BOARD STAFF.

The Board's offices are now located at 406 Lonsdale-street, Melbourne, having been transferred there from the Chief Secretary's Department.

Mr. P. E. Felton, Superintendent of Aborigines' Welfare, who commenced duty in April, 1958, has covered the whole of the State during the year in his preliminary investigation of aborigines in Victoria. He has travelled many thousands of miles in making his general survey of the situation and has for the first time established a contact between the Board and most families in the State.

He has been ably assisted by Mr. M. C. Taylor, Welfare Officer, who commenced duty on 1st September, 1958. He also has travelled continuously, meeting aborigines and attending to welfare problems as they arise.

The initial survey has not been completed and both officers still continue to meet new families in different parts.

Mr. T. N. Garnet was appointed Secretary to the Board, having previously acted as Secretary and prior to that as Secretary to the original Board for the Protection of the Aborigines for many years.

The Welfare staff is insufficient to cover the whole of the work to be done; ultimately it would appear that the State will have to be divided into regions with a Welfare officer permanently stationed in each region.

### SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND.

The Save the Children Fund is the British Empire Section of the International Union for Child Welfare which was originated in 1919. The Fund exists to prevent and to ameliorate suffering among children without regard to race, colour, or creed, and to promote higher standards of child care and protection throughout the world. It functions in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of the Child, commonly known as the Declaration of Geneva.

In Victoria, the Save the Children Fund devotes a major proportion of its work to conducting welfare centres for aboriginal children. These centres are located at Robinvale, Dimboola, and Mooropna and in these towns there is a permanently staffed welfare building. There is also a Worker in the Echuca district.

The activities at the welfare centres consist of pre-school kindergartens, clubs for boys and girls, medical supervision, and so on. The centres also distribute medicines, infant foods, &c., where necessary, for aboriginal children—the Board meeting the cost. Educational grants are also provided by the Fund to assist and encourage school attendance. The Board is greatly appreciative of the work which is being done by the Save the Children Fund in Victoria.

### VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS.

In its last Report reference was made to the number of voluntary organizations in the field of aboriginal welfare. During the year the Board has endeavoured to bring about amalgamation of some of these bodies. This would achieve a closer relationship between their activities and those of the Board and economy in administrative expenses which account in some cases for a considerable amount of the moneys raised for welfare work. Its efforts have not been successful. The Board is aware of a number of these bodies who make collections from the general public but only one is registered with the Hospitals and Charities Commission. Some of them have been reluctant to supply information, attend conferences, or discuss the subject of amalgamation. There is no liaison between them and the Board, consequently there is frequent duplication of effort and expenditure.

The Board will continue its efforts to bring about some co-ordination of these bodies and in the meantime will be pleased to advise members of the public where their donations can be placed to the best advantage.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

During the year the Board has received ready co-operation from the various government and semi-government departments, municipal councils, local committees, and organizations, and records its acknowledgment and appreciation.

Particular mention is made of the Victorian Housing Commission which has readily agreed to construct its houses and of the Department of Lands and Survey which has provided areas of Crown land for housing settlements.

Police officers in all localities where the Board has an interest have been most helpful.

### CONCLUSION.

One of the most important lessons learned during the year was that the question of aboriginal welfare is a complex one. It is not merely a question of building sufficient houses, or of appointing more welfare officers, or of spending money on other welfare projects but it is a question of embarking upon a comprehensive programme of social reforms. The various aspects of the aboriginal welfare programme are all interrelated; for instance, the solution of the housing problem involves the question of continuous employment, and the solution of the employment problem involves education and training, and in its turn the question of education is related to living standards.

Victoria cannot afford to be complacent about the work which has already been done in aboriginal welfare. **There is still a very great deal of work ahead of the Board.**

In this scheme of aboriginal welfare, the Board expects the aborigines to play their part by helping themselves. The Board wants them to be self-reliant and to show that they can take their place in the community.

The Board is determined that aboriginal welfare in Victoria shall be tackled wisely and well. It is determined to face up squarely to the issues and to work for an early solution. **Aboriginal welfare represents a challenge.** There are problems and difficulties to be overcome but these must be faced and the Board is not going to be deterred by difficulties and the possibility of failure. It is easy enough for the public to say that aboriginal welfare is the responsibility of the Government, but this attitude is wrong; aboriginal welfare is a community responsibility and it is the duty of everyone to face up to this social problem, just as the public is facing up to our other social problems.

MURRAY PORTER,  
Chairman.

## APPENDIX I.

## DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINES IN VICTORIA.

GIPPSLAND.	Lake Tyers .. .. .	156	
	Lakes Entrance .. .. .	81	
	Mills west of Orbost .. .. .	52	
	Orbost .. .. .	108	
	Mills east of Orbost .. .. .	32	
	Bairnsdale .. .. .	10	
	Latrobe Valley .. .. .	20	
	Drouin .. .. .	46	
	South Gippsland .. .. .	33	
Miscellaneous .. .. .	19		
	—	557	
MALLEE .. .. .	Robinvale .. .. .	156	
	Swan Hill .. .. .	103	
	Miscellaneous .. .. .	22	
	—	281	
NORTH .. .. .	Shepparton District .. .. .	283	
	Echuca .. .. .	126	
	Barmah .. .. .	101	
	Miscellaneous .. .. .	23	
	—	533	
WIMMERA .. .. .	Dimboola District .. .. .	103	
	—	103	
WEST .. .. .	Warrnambool .. .. .	129	
	Portland—Heywood .. .. .	86	
	Miscellaneous .. .. .	10	
	—	225	
CENTRAL .. .. .	Healesville .. .. .	48	
	Marysville .. .. .	31	
	Ballarat .. .. .	32	
	Dandenong .. .. .	20	
	Metropolitan .. .. .	300	
	—	431	
INSTITUTIONS, ETC. .. .. .		130	
	—	130	
	Total .. .. .	2,260	

NOTE.—These figures do not include the people referred to in paragraph 5 under "Numbers and Distribution of Aborigines in Victoria" in the main body of the Report.

## APPENDIX II.

## ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD.

1958-59.

*Expenditure.*

	£
Salaries and Wages .. .. .	10,610
Travelling Expenses .. .. .	1,945
Stores and Medical Supplies .. .. .	10,436
Building Maintenance and Repairs .. .. .	4,305
Farming and Livestock .. .. .	2,925
Office Rent and Furniture .. .. .	1,327
Other Expenses .. .. .	2,039
	<hr/>
	33,587
	<hr/>