

James Morgan lived in two worlds

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The late Mr James Morgan was a man who lived in two worlds—that of the Aborigine and of other Australians.

Several speakers made this point in tributes to Mr Morgan yesterday.

He collapsed and died on Wednesday shortly before he was to address a large crowd in Casino's Civic Hall for National Aborigines Day celebrations.

A full blood Aborigine, Mr Morgan was known as "the last of the Dyraaba tribe".

Area officer for the Aborigines Welfare Board, Mr E. J. Morgan, said yesterday the late Mr Morgan's roots were deep in the Dyraaba area.

He was born on the site of Casino racecourse.

He was a fluent speaker of Bunjalong and had a working knowledge of the twelve dialects in the

Bunjalong area which extends from Ipswich to Grafton.

He was completely influenced by the pre-white culture with its sorcery, ritual, and magic, but adhered to his belief in God and was a Christian, Mr Morgan said.

He could communicate much better with his own people by being able to speak Bunjalong, but also spoke English faultlessly and was an excellent public speaker and letter writer.

Virtually he was self-educated. He became fascinated with the English language and read widely.

He also was an expert on folk lore of this area. He made many recordings for Richmond River Historical Society with journalist, the late Mildred Norledge, Mr Morgan said.

District Aborigines, in a statement yesterday, said they were happy Mr Morgan had died in that manner, as it was the way he would have wished.

He was 68, and leaves a widow and seven children, Rex, Alex, Patricia, Ray, Gloria, Keith, and Bruce.

The secretary of the Aborigines' Welfare Board, Mr J. A. Henderson, came from Sydney to represent the board at the funeral.

Mr Henderson said Mr Morgan became a member of the board in 1964.

The board, which is to be abolished soon, consists of eleven members, two of whom are Aborigines.

Mr Henderson said Mr Morgan was fully assimilated in the Australian way of life, but retained a deep love of his Aboriginal people.

Mr Henderson said he had no doubt Mr Morgan had a real sense of responsibility towards representing his people.

Possibly he sometimes attended meetings at considerable inconvenience to himself.

He retired from the Department of Public Works as a maintenance worker in 1967, after 20 years service.

Mr Morgan (centre) collapsed and died only half an hour after this picture was taken by a Northern Star photographer. On the right is Mrs R. W. Manyweathers, president of the Casino Aborigines Welfare Association. On the left is the Mayor of Casino, Ald A. S. Naphthali

