
CHANGES IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

The Commonwealth Government will soon introduce a scheme whereby primary school children living in distinctive Aboriginal communities will be taught in their own native tongue.

The scheme is part of a programme aimed at preserving Aboriginal languages and tribal culture. Other aspects include the teaching of traditional Aboriginal arts, crafts, and skills, including carving, music, dancing, tracking, traditional religion, and mythology.

In nearly all cases the teaching will be done by Aborigines. Because of this there will be a delay before the scheme is fully implemented. Aboriginal teacher assistants will have to be trained and there will be new courses for European teachers.

The programme will be implemented at special schools, beginning first in the Northern Territory. Alice Springs, Gove, Groote Eylandt, Roper River, Bathurst and Melville Islands and Port Keats will be among the first areas where schools will be established. Plans involve later extending the scheme to tribal areas in North Queensland, the Kimberleys in Western Australia and the north of South Australia.

At Hermannsburg Mission School outside Alice Springs a similar scheme has in effect been operating

for several years. All primary schooling is conducted in local Aboriginal languages and English is taught as a second language.

It was found that the children experienced virtually no trouble in adapting and in most cases they spoke better English than children who had learned only one language.

There are more than 600 recorded Aboriginal languages. Teaching, however, will be confined to less than a dozen of the most widely known and used languages. English will still be used in such subjects as mathematics.

It is hoped that this approach, which gives equal recognition to both Aboriginal and European culture, will make it easier for Aborigines to adjust to life in white society without losing their own identity and culture. In this context it is essential that Aboriginal teachers be used.

Since the Second World War there has been a growing recognition among missionaries and others that the most effective form of communication with Aborigines in tribal areas is the native tongue. The scheme now proposed gives official effect to what has previously been an informal practice.

1973 Junior Secondary Bursaries

Each year the Directorate of Aboriginal Welfare awards up to ten special bursaries to Aboriginal secondary students under the age of 15.

These are awarded to students who do not receive a regular State bursary but who show the ability to carry on their studies and who need encouragement. The value of the bursary is approximately \$39 per year.

The following Aboriginal children have been awarded Junior Secondary Bursaries for 1973:

Shane DEVITT, Dumaresq.
Max McDONALD, Annandale.
John IVANOFF, Narrandera.

Terrance DOOLAN, Bourke.
Daniel POWER, Eungai Rail.
Peter KNIGHT, Bourke.
Vincent LONGBOTTOM, Kingsford.
John MACKAY, Bourke.
Maxwell SAUNDERS, Holsworthy.

HOME LOAN FINANCE INCREASED

As of 1st January, this year the maximum amount available for a home loan has been increased from \$9,600 to \$13,080.

Applications or enquiries about home loans can be made at any office of the Department of Child Welfare or to the Directorate of Aboriginal Welfare, P.O. Box K 718, Haymarket, N.S.W. 2000.