

Aboriginal Assistants at Save the Children Fund Pre-schools

A two day seminar was held in Sydney on the 10th and 11th October, 1974. Areas represented by participants were Armidale, Ashford, Brewarrina, Coffs Harbour, Cowra, Griffith, Kempsey, Lake Cargelligo, Nambucca Heads, Taree, Walgett, and Bourke.

Lady Harrison welcomed all the assistants and members of the Pre-school Sub-committee of N.S.W. Division S.C.F. also Miss Kelly of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Mrs Lea then opened the seminar and introduced Miss Jean Robinson, who is the supervisor (part time) of S.C.F. Pre-schools. Her topic was language development, and emphasised talking to the children was everyone's job that we must all be willing to talk and not to close off conversations, but to get down to the child's level physically and prolong conversations.

Miss Robinson then discussed with all assistants how they used opportunities for language in their daily programmes.

The seminar then moved to the Sydney County Council Showrooms for a talk on nutrition by Mrs Margo Cross, who demonstrated recipes and discussed hints on food preparation.

The seminar participants visited St. Ives Barra Brui Kindergarten to see the Kindergarten work and compare practices and ideas. They also visited the Far West Childrens Home at Manly, where the social worker explained how the children came to Far West, and how they are cared for there.

The then Minister for Youth and Community Services, the Hon. R. O. Healey M.L.A. and Mr Keith Kocken of the Directorate of Aboriginal Welfare, with their wives joined the assistants for

dinner and were able to meet them personally and exchange a few pleasant remarks with them.

The following day, Miss Robinson spoke on the value of outdoor play and equipment and again stressed the importance of listening to children. Dr John Ward, Senior Medical Officer of the Health Commission of N.S.W., Section of Aboriginal Health, spoke on health and housing, with advice to the assistants on how to treat health problems.

Mrs Shirley Smith of the Aboriginal Medical Service, Redfern, spoke to the group on the value of education and the desirability of complete co-operation with anyone willing to offer help and assistance she also spoke of the problems of inner city living.

Mrs Lea then wound up the seminar of 1974 and thanked everyone, who had attended and who had made it such a worthwhile programme.

Mrs R. O. Healey and Mrs Hoskins of Coffs Harbour

