

PA ACT Series A452/1 Item 56/162

REVIEW REPORT

02562000

"RETTA DIXON HOME": ABORIGINES INLAND MISSION:  
BAGOT RESERVE, DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY.NATURE AND LOCATION OF MISSION.

The "Retta Dixon Home" for part-aboriginal children is located on the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve about five miles north of Darwin. The Home is under the control of the Aborigines Inland Mission whose headquarters are at 242 Pitt Street, Sydney.

In its present situation the Home occupies a position between the Bagot Aboriginal Hospital and the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, with no opportunity for expansion and their accommodation is crowded. Approval has been given by the Minister, vide Secretary, Department of Territories memorandum 51/1195 of 16th August, 1951, for the transfer of the Home to a new site near the Stuart Highway and approximately seven miles out of Darwin.

The Superintendent of the Home has inspected the new site and is agreeable to the transfer of the Home. Her suggestions, with reference to the Home at its new site, were incorporated in the plan of the new Home for which the estimates were provided by the Department of Works and Housing.

The Aborigines Inland Mission, through their "Retta Dixon Home", provide a home for part-aboriginal children of 50% or less aboriginal blood. Educational, training and hospital facilities provided for the white children of Darwin are available to the inmates of the Home. Through these facilities, the inmates have the opportunity of preparation for their places as full citizens in the life of the Northern Territory.

Young women who are out of employment, and expectant mothers, find a haven here, and mothers frequently visit their children and spend weekends in the Home.

STATISTICS.

The children are drawn from all parts of the northern section of the Northern Territory.

Inmates:

1st July, 1950 - 67 children, 10 adults.  
30th June, 1951 - 81 children, 12 adults.

One of the senior girls has been happily married to a part-aborigine in the Darwin community.

HOUSING:

There has been no development in housing facilities, in view of the impending move of the Institution to a new site.

FOOD: STORAGE, PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION.

Food is supplied by the Northern Territory Administration through its Native Affairs Section. See Financial Statement.

Food is prepared under supervision in the well-appointed kitchen attached to the dining-room. Proper storage facilities are available and refrigeration is installed.

Food comes to the table well prepared and appetising. Attention has been given to the necessity of providing a balanced diet.

#### GENERAL STORAGE.

Sufficient storage is available for the present needs.

#### HEALTH.

The health record of the community is good. Apart from a light epidemic of mumps in December, 1950, and January, 1951, there has been no serious illness during the year.

Inmates receive hospitalisation in the Darwin Hospital with the white residents and receive the same attention as the white patients.

All of the inmates were given the Mantoux test for Tuberculosis by a medical officer and all who showed a positive reaction were X-rayed; no case of active tuberculosis was found.

#### PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Fifty-nine children are attending the Darwin Public and Higher Primary School; fifty-eight children attend the Public School and one child the Higher Primary School. The children are conveyed to and from school by Administration Transport.

At the end of the 1950 school year, all except six children were promoted to a higher grade.

Weekly craft classes are held at the Home for children over twelve years of age, where instruction is given in fancy work, raffia, leatherwork and weaving with hand looms.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHING AND WORSHIP.

The school children attend religious instruction classes at the Darwin School in company with the white children. Regular religious meetings are held at the Home on Sundays for the inmates.

The spiritual work has a regular and reasonable place in the life of the Mission; the aim of the staff is to express the spiritual teaching in the general life of the Home.

#### EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT.

One girl was married early in the year, and two other girls left school at the end of 1950; one of the latter is preparing to enter the A.I.M. Native Workers' Training College in New South Wales; the other is continuing with practical home training in the Home.

The Institution offers a home for part-aboriginal women who require assistance and who need accommodation. Every effort is made to obtain suitable employment for them in domestic and general work in the town.

#### RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE.

The children join with the white children in the

recreation life of the school; a games period is a part of the weekly school curriculum.

Organised indoor games are held one evening each week at the Home and the children are given regular Saturday outings to the beach and holiday camping places.

A piano and 16 m.m. movie sound projector were purchased during the year and are now in use for the Home. Three children are learning music.

#### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

A regular service bus connects the Home with the town of Darwin. The Mission also has its own motor vehicle for transport purposes.

The Home is connected by telephone with Darwin.

#### STAFF AND SUPERVISION.

Under the supervision of the Superintendent, Miss A.N. Shankleton, the staff comprises :-

- 2 Miss G. Denham - European Missionary, in charge of the nursery.
- 3 Miss M. Spohn - European Missionary, in charge of the kindergarten children.
- 4 Miss C. South - Part-aboriginal trained Missionary.
- 5 Miss V. Knox - " " " "
- 6 Mrs. C. Knox - " " " "
- 7 Mr. R. Stretton - European Missionary, was in charge of the boys for seven months, the remainder of the year he was absent on itinerant work.

The female staff is adequate for the present needs; however, a trained male missionary, resident all the year, is essential for the control and training of the boys. A European married couple are now doing their probation with the Mission in New South Wales, in preparation for joining the Institution staff in Darwin.

#### FINANCE.

##### BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR 1950/1951.

<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
Balance for year 1949/	
1950: £525.14.3.	Staff Wages and Travelling expenses ... £664. 6.11.
Donations from Mission Sources .. 162.13.5.	Transport ... 253. 9.10.
Donations from Parents.. 33.16.0.	Childrens' clothing, bedding, linen, school requisites and recreation expenses ... 1847.18. 7.
Child Endowment .. 1568. 6.3.	General expenses and repairs. 206. 4. 9.
Staff Allowance Grant.. 1000. 0.0.	Telephone Account ... 26. 2.11.
Government Rations supplied ... 3100. 0.0.	<u>Rations -</u>
	Meat ... £403.
	Bread ... £450.
	Fruit, Veggies.
	Butter ... £933.
	Groceries... £464.
	Stores from Bagot Bulk
	Ration Store <u>£850.</u> 3100. 0. 0.
	Balance: 292. 6.11.
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£6390.9.11.	£6390. 9.11.
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Item for 1949/1950. Contribution from inmates of Home and parents of children = £134.5.0. Item for 1950/1951 Donations from Parents = £33.16.0. The numbers of those able to contribute have decreased and one is now on the staff of Bagot Hospital and due for free rations.

Food to the value of £3,100 was supplied by the Northern Territory Administration through its Native Affairs Section.

The cost of a reconditioned piano, £200, and a movie sound projector, £275, are included in Item 3 of the Expenditure.

Gifts of clothing and Christmas cheer were provided for the inmates of the Home by Mission supporters in the South, to the value of £240.

The financial assistance given this Mission in addition to the value of food and other supplies mentioned above, is at present a £1,000 grant as a staff subsidy. The assistance is considered adequate and its continuance is recommended.

GENERAL COMMENTS.

In the Retta Dixon Home we see a part-aboriginal community growing up in the midst of a white community; the children attend the same school as the white children and receive hospitalisation in the general hospital with the white patients.

The service rendered by the Home for the part-aboriginal women is the only one of its kind in Darwin and is helping to meet a great need. The control of this section of the work is good.

The Institution is making satisfactory progress in preparation of the inmates for life in our community, and in its work for part-aboriginal women, is meeting an essential need in Darwin.

*G. Sweeney*  
(G. Sweeney)  
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT.  
27.9.51.