

A B O R I G I N E S    I N L A N D    M I S S I O N    O F    A U S T .

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RETTA DIXON HOMES.

H A N D   B O O K   F O R   T H E   U S E   O F   H O U S E   P A R E N T S   A N D   S T A F F   W O R K E R S .

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Mission  
Objects.

The Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia has as its principal object the preaching of Christ among the Aborigines and coloured people of Australia to the intent that they shall rejoice in the assurance of sin forgiven and the knowledge of eternal life through our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

The primary purpose of establishing and maintaining the Retta Dixon Homes is that the children accepted as inmates might be brought to this saving knowledge of Christ.

Doctrinal  
Beliefs.

The Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia is an association of members of all evangelical communities. It calls for the acceptance of a definite Doctrinal basis which is set out in its Constitution. ( See appendix for this Doctrinal Statement.)

House Parents and Staff Workers will be required to agree with this and to teach along the lines laid down in Section 3 of the Mission's Constitution and to work in fellowship with all who are attached to the Mission.

If applicants are conscious that their views differ in any important point from those usually held by evangelical Christians, they are expected to state such differences. If after their acceptance their views on any of the points of doctrine change they should inform the Superintendent.

Applicants.

The selection of candidates for missionary service is a sacred responsibility. This will apply also to the acceptance of House Parents and Staff Workers for the Retta Dixon Homes. Therefore rigid requirements are necessary and our Mission Council prayerfully strives to exercise true spiritual discernment, in order that the utmost in vital missionary effort may be accomplished.

The essential qualifications of applicants for appointment as House Parents and Staff Workers include the following :

Applicants must have been genuinely converted, and possess a vital Christian experience. They should give clear evidence of their lives being wholly consecrated to God.

House Parents and Staff Workers in the cottages are accepted by the Mission on their confession of being definitely called by the Lord to do the work required in the Retta Dixon Homes.

There is no provision for a transfer in any way to any other part of the field work of the Mission. Appointments are to the Retta Dixon Homes as distinct from the rest of the field.

2.

Work in the Homes is to be mutually recognised as being a God-given opportunity for missionary service. It should be regarded as a calling, being called of God, and not just a job.

**New Workers.  
Travelling  
Assistance.**

New workers accepted for the Homes may have some assistance with their forward fares. In the case of House Parents the maximum would be the equivalent of the single overland fare from point of departure to Darwin for the couple and for one child. This will not cover any charges for excess baggage. As a general rule the same would apply to Staff Workers.

A very real contribution to the erection of the present Homes buildings as well as the conduct of the work over the years has been made by Christians who have given voluntary service and in many cases have accepted the full responsibility of their own fares. Some of our present Staff have, of their own volition, paid all of their travelling expenses and refrain from drawing the full amount of the allowance to which they are entitled.

There is no obligation on the part of any new worker to do this but it is mentioned because so many have wanted to do something ( wholly or in part) of this nature as a further service for the Lord and to recognise His goodness in prospering and blessing them.

**Responsibilities  
of  
Workers.**

The basic qualification expected in every accepted applicant is a very real sense of dedication. First a dedication to the Lord as the Lord of our lives and then a true sense of dedication to the work undertaken in His name with the children in the Homes.

House Parents are expected to take full responsibility for their particular cottage but must recognise that where there are eight separate cottages within the Homes there must be a common working basis as laid down by the Superintendent and each House Parent and Staff Worker will be required to work harmoniously under his direction.

**Duties.**

Under the present policy it is required that all House Parents and Staff Workers devote their full time to the work within the Homes.

The ten acres of ground, the fifteen buildings on that ground and the necessary equipment which goes with it, the two holiday centres attached to the Homes ( Lee Point and Coomalie Creek ) call for many man hours to keep everything in a proper state of repair.

It is desired that the whole of the Homes will be a good witness in the community, giving to visitors and passers-by every evidence of being a well-conducted Christian enterprise.

## 3.

Duties.  
(continued.)

No set hours are laid down but a working week will in every way be at least comparable with those served by people in secular work.

Some of the work shared by the men folk will be the maintainence of the buildings, upkeep of the whole of the grounds, supervising the store and the distribution of the foodstuffs, driving and caring for the vehicles attached to the Homes.

The Superintendent will be responsible for delegating the various duties of the Staff.

It should be obvious to all that in an undertaking of this nature it will entail House Parents doing considerably more than just working on their own particular cottage and its grounds. This work around the respective cottages should be done as would be the case if the father were in regular secular work.

There should be a readiness to do all things heartily as unto the Lord for we serve the Lord Christ. At all times there will be expected a willingness to "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Provision is made for days off, holidays and furlough.

Cottage  
Inspections.

There will be regular weekly inspections of the cottages by the Superintendent. Since the objective of the Mission through the House Parents is to set up and establish a Christian home it is hoped that these inspections will be purely routine and not have to call for any corrective measures.

The Superintendent will fully co-operate with each House Parent and Staff Worker to lift the standard of the work, to improve the appearance of the property, the dress and the conduct of the children and it is expected that our workers will freely confer and co-operate with him on these matters.

House Parents and Staff Workers will be expected to maintain a high standard of dress so that a good example will always be set for the children.

It is the responsibility of the House Parents to see that the children are creditably dressed, and punctual in attendance for the school bus.

Staff  
Meetings.

Staff meetings are held regularly. Members gather for prayer and prayerful discussion of the work and the problems associated with it. All Staff members are required to attend these meetings, with particular emphasis on the daily staff prayer meetings.

Church  
Attendance.

All children from the Homes are taken each Sunday morning to the Community Church at Stuart Park and House Parents and Staff Workers are required to escort the children of their cottage and be responsible for them. Children may attend at night

4.

Church  
Attendance.  
Sunday  
Observance.

at the discretion of the House Parents and the Superintendent.

Sunday School is conducted within the Homes on Sunday afternoons and assistance is sought from the Staff to help with the conduct of this.

To maintain a Scriptural attitude to the Lord's day it is required that no washing be done on the Sunday, that the clothes lines be cleared of all washing, that there be no watering of the gardens and that House Parents endeavour to keep their regular house duties to a minimum.

It is not desired to be legalistic in these matters but there is a responsibility to teach the children by the power of example and an obligation to have a good testimony before those ' who are without.'

Outings in the generally accepted sense of the word are not to be taken on Sundays, obeying the Scriptural injunction to avoid all appearance of evil.

School  
Work.

Children of school age attend Nightcliff Public School and travel by public transport. They take out lunches with them.

Some of the smaller children attend Pre-school Kindergarten for part of the day.

House Parents are responsible for the supervision of any home work committed to the children by their teachers. It is hoped that they will also be able to give some assistance to any who may be backward with their school work.

A Library is set up in the Recreation Hall and special books are available to assist the children with their school work and school projects they have to do.

School  
Holidays.

It is hoped that during school holidays special Camps can be organised for the children either at Lee Point or Coomalie Creek ( or both ) and mutual arrangements will be made with the Staff for the conduct of these. ( See also Transport.)

It must be clearly understood that unless drafted away to these Camps House Parents and Staff Workers will carry on with their regular work responsibilities. Unfortunately holidays for the children are not holidays for the House Parents and Staff.

Recreational  
Outings.

The Superintendent in consultation with House Parents will plan for regular outings on Saturdays and public holidays for the children either as a whole from the Homes or in groups. Unless especially arranged to the contrary each House Parent will be responsible for the care and supervision of the children from their particular cottage.

5.

On all regular outings any cost of transport will be met by the Homes.

#### Transport.

In the general conduct of the Homes it is necessary for vehicles to travel to and from the city. These will be available for staff to travel in as passengers provided it can be arranged for them to fit in with any scheduled trip.

Public transport will have to be used for any special trips for personal business or pleasure. A public bus stops at the front gate of the Homes.

When the holiday camp sites are fully set up it is hoped that " cottages " will be able to make use of them at suitable times as a family unit and the Superintendent will assist, as required, with transporting the children and necessary supplies.

Where Staff members drive any Homes vehicle every care should be exercised not only to obey traffic regulations, to drive safely and courteously at all times but to drive so as to maintain a good Christian witness.

#### Salaries.

Unless arranged to the contrary House Parents will be paid an allowance of £10 per week. In the case of Single Staff Workers the amount will be £5 per week. In addition to this there will be the provision of all basic food supplies as well as other benefits.

Where the House Parents have children a contribution is to be made to the Homes at the rate of £1/10/- per week for each of the first two children and £1 per week for each additional child.

The above salary rates and contributions may be varied from time to time.

Only under special circumstances will applications be considered from intending House Parents who have more than three children.

Cottages are fully furnished except personal linen required by House Parents and Staff Workers. The cottages are 'all electric ' which is supplied free to the cottages and these charges are paid by the Homes.

House Parents and Staff Workers are encouraged to bring any small items of furniture or furnishings which will help make the Cottage more homely but should confer with the Superintendent before making any final decision.

Food ( including fruit and vegetables) and clothing are provided for the children delegated to each cottage but it is required of House Parents that

6.

Salaries  
(Continued.)

they keep the children's clothing in good repair and where possible assist in making or altering garments to meet the need.

For birthdays and on special occasions the Superintendent will gladly make available some " extras " to assist the house parents in making the occasion a special feature for the child or children concerned.

There are occasions when special gifts of fruit and delicacies are given to the Homes and these are shared between the cottages.

Any special foodstuff required over and above that provided by the Homes will be the responsibility of the House Parent or Staff Worker concerned.

Every care should be exercised that in the matter of food and clothing there should be no marked discrimination.

Resignations.

In the event of leaving before completing twelve month's service no responsibility can be assumed by the Homes for any return fares.

After twelve month's service travelling assistance may be given in proportion to the time served on the basis set out for meeting furlough fares.

Holidays.

House Parents and Staff Workers will have a day off each week. House Mothers should take advantage of the time the children are at school to get a short time of rest during the afternoons. House Parents and Staff Workers may have a fortnight's holiday each year by arrangement with the Superintendent.

Furlough.

After three year's service a furlough of six weeks on full pay will be granted. An additional four days will be allowed to cover time taken for travelling. Tourist class return air fare to Capital cities will be paid for the House Parents and Staff Workers and where there are children the fare for the first child.

Holidays will not be due again until twelve months after return from furlough.

If no travel is made for furlough furlough pay will be made but no travelling expenses.

Sick Pay.

Sick pay will be allowed for a period not exceeding two weeks in each year.

Hospital  
Fees.

A concession made at the present time by the Darwin Hospital and Dental Clinic is that Workers in the Retta Dixon Homes will be treated free of charge.

7.

**Discipline.**

House Parents and Staff Workers are expected to discipline the children of their cottage " training them up in the way they should go."

Government regulations prohibit corporal punishment being applied to the children. This must be strictly observed.

Where-ever possible handle the behaviour problems of your cottage yourself. You will find it makes for much happier relationships with the children and causes them to have a greater respect for you.

Discipline where children are concerned does not mean just wielding a big stick. It is to be the means ( discipline not the big stick!) where we can get children to learn how to live a balanced, sensible, obedient life and still have all the joys of childhood. They should have natural but ordered living without regimentation.

The power of example is a big factor. Where House Parents and Staff are relaxed and co-operative the children will catch the same spirit and there will be less tension and better discipline.

If YOU are tidy the children are more likely to be so; if you nag, the children are sure to reflect a cranky, argumentative spirit.

Sometimes it will be necessary to stop and ask yourself : " Is the child really at fault or am I?"

We all need to learn to work with children, and not to just simply stand back and give orders. Discuss things with the children so that they feel they have a share in the cottage programme, and not just a work share at that.

Children in the Homes come into our care having a very poor heredity and past environment. Most, if not all, are bewildered and do not know what is required of them. It takes time to learn. They so easily forget things. Do not take it for granted that they know all the ' whys ' and ' wherefores '. Take time to explain why they must or must not do certain things.

Any serious cases of disobedience and trouble with a child should be reported to the Superintendent who will assist the House Parent by taking appropriate action.

Where children of other cottages are involved in any serious trouble with those in your own the matter should be promptly referred to the Superintendent.

**Dealing  
with  
outside  
Bodies.**

No approach shall be made by any House Parent or Staff Worker direct to Welfare Branch or any outside body unless first fully discussed with the Superintendent and then only with his sanction.

8.

Dealing with  
Outside Bodies.

House Parents and Staff Workers are not to commit the Homes for any financial obligation without a written order from the Superintendent.

Reports.

House Parents will be required to fill in regular report forms, giving the required information about the children in their cottage, meals served and such other information as may be required by the Superintendent. These reports may also be used to provide the basis of discussion and planning at Staff meetings.

Pocket Money  
for  
Children.

Each child who is a regular resident of the Homes receives a monthly allowance as pocket money. The amount varies according to age. In addition where children have other obligations such as fees for membership in the Girls' Life Brigade or Boy's Club these amounts are also given so that they can meet them.

This money is to be regarded as the property of the child and is only held in trust by the House Parent. The child should have the spending of it. Should any child be unable to appreciate money and its values then the House Parent may spend it expressly for the child concerned.

House Parents should make this an opportunity to counsel and train the children to spend their money wisely, to learn something of stewardship and to acquire habits which in later life will encourage them to be thrifty.

" Fines " may be imposed for deliberate damage caused for breakages occasioned by carelessness, for loss of property ( bus tickets, etc ) through neglect.

Lectures  
and  
Classes.

Bulletins will be issued from time to time to assist House Parents and Staff Workers.

As and when Child Welfare experts are available in Darwin the Superintendent will endeavour to make use of their services for special lectures and/or classes in which case it will be required of all staff to attend.

Should Tutorial Classes be set up in Darwin to give assistance to House Parents the Superintendent will have the right to request any of the House Parents or Staff Workers to attend them. Duties will be rostered to make this possible and any cost involved will be borne by the Homes.

Visitors.

House Parents and Staff Workers are asked to exercise particular care in the matter of visitors to their cottage.

Permission must be obtained from the Superintendent before inviting any one to come and stay. Unless there are special circumstances such stay should only be of a short duration. It probably will not



Visitors.  
(Continued.)

but if it should, resident visitors will be asked to refrain from smoking during their stay.

Christian  
Service.

There are opportunities to participate in Christian service within and without the Homes. Staff should consider their work in the Homes as a very definite Christian service. In addition there are regular prayer meetings, open air meetings, religious instruction classes at schools, children's and youth meetings, and church services. House Parents and Staff Workers are encouraged to participate in these as they are able.

House Parents should also seek to introduce in to their cottages a very real missionary interest, by informing, instructing and interesting the children in missionary work in other lands.

Clinic  
and  
Medical  
Attention.

There is a well equipped Clinic centrally situated in a special building set apart for the purpose. In addition to the Dispensary it has a three bed ward.

The Homes have a resident nursing sister but the Health Department sends a Sister out to make a weekly check up on any of the children who are not well or who are for any reason not making good progress physically. From time to time children have been brought in to the Homes suffering from severe malnutrition.

Any cases among the children which call for special medical or hospital attention are taken to the Darwin Hospital and treated there.

House Parents should see that any ailments or injuries to children in their cottage receive prompt medical attention.

Public  
Holidays.

Unless an emergency arises no general maintenance work will be done on public holidays.

Being a public holiday the children will be home from school and House Parents and Staff Workers are expected to accept their responsibility to care for the children.

Under ordinary circumstances some form of outing is generally planned for these occasions and it will be readily recognised that whether at home or away there is still the responsibility of catering for the children committed to the care of House Parents.