

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE OF THE NORTH COAST CHILDREN'S HOME FOR  
YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1978.

I am delighted that on the financial side the Executive is able to report a much-improved position than that presented at the last two annual meetings. In those two previous years deficits of \$5,000.00 and \$8,500.00 respectively gave cause for alarm but as a result of excellent media assistance and the seizing of opportunities to speak at a number of community gatherings, we can report this year a surplus of just under \$3,000.00. The pleasing aspect of the year's finances has been an increase in community support from \$22,000.00 in 1977 to \$37,000.00 this year. I hasten to add that this magnificent public response to our call for assistance still only allowed us to end the year with a marginal surplus and the expected continuation in increased operating costs for food and other necessities, could see a return to the previous position.

I emphasise that the improvement in the financial picture has resulted from public support and I express the disappointment of the Executive in the paucity of support from State and Commonwealth Governments. From the information available to us, N.S.W. lags behind all other States in Governmental funding of non-governmental child-caring agencies. A 1976 study carried out by the Roman Catholic Church and reported in a paper produced by the N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies for submission to our State Government this year indicated that that Government spends \$265.00 per week on each child who is a State Ward, yet only gives \$20.00 allowance per week to non-governmental agencies for similar children who are not State Wards. This gives some indication of the extra cost to the State if these non State Wards, through the financial difficulties of charitable agencies, were transferred to State responsibility. In the past year the State Government increased the Sec.27A weekly allowance from \$15.00 per week to \$20.00 per week. We are of the opinion that this was only a token gesture and does not face up to the problem. The miserable \$5.00 per week would have been devoured by inflationary costs within weeks. The Government must face up to the problem and to the discrimination being practised against children in non-governmental Homes - some form of funding related to proper operating costs or properly supervised staff salary costs must be established or the State will find itself obliged to cope with the total costs of maintaining many of the children now in charitable Homes.

In summary the bread and butter costs of running the Home this year totalled \$81,000.00 plus an amount in excess of \$15,000.00 raised and expended independently by the Ladies Auxilliary who provide wonderfully for the children's clothing and Home furnishings. This total of \$96,000.00 compares with a total similar expenditure of just under \$82,000.00 last year.

One area in which increased State aid was given was through the Children in Institutions grant which provided funds for certain approved projects. This enabled us to finance remedial teaching groups three nights weekly, leather work groups, guitar lessons, arts and crafts classes, mathematics coaching and two group excursions to Sydney. The latter were under the supervision of John and Rita Langler who stood up to the rigours extremely well and earned our gratitude.

The main Home building has been completely repainted externally as well as being internally maintained where necessary. A new senior boys' common room has been provided from part of the clothes storage area to give the seniors some sense of separateness from the younger ones;

Our thanks are extended to:

Mr. Bill Cross for his continuing work with the children;  
 Dr. David Thomas and his colleagues for medical care and  
 his involvement with the children in other directions;  
 Messrs. Kempnich, Tsikleas and Molloy for dental care;  
 Mr. Geoff Brickhill for optometrical care;  
 Miss Peg Parry who has been caring for the girls' hair for  
 25 years;  
 The many service and other Clubs and groups in the area for  
 a variety of assistance;  
 The families who act as holiday hosts for our children;  
 Mr. Bruce Young and Mr. John Terakes who give much appreciated  
 practical assistance;  
 Members of the South Lismore Hockey Club, especially Mr. Noonan,  
 for supervising our boys at hockey;  
 The management and staff of Radio 2LM for the annual Christmas  
 Charity Appeal;  
 The organisers of the Combined Service Clubs for the milk appeal;

Our children continue to benefit from a well-  
 balanced academic and sporting programme. As previously  
 mentioned remedial teaching groups, mathematics coaching  
 and various music, arts and crafts classes are conducted  
 and are proving beneficial. On the sporting side some of  
 the boys accompany Dr. Thomas to the small bore rifle club  
 meetings and other children participate in hockey, soccer,  
 gymnastics, netball and other sports. Our horse paddock  
 continues to provide great entertainment as well as a training  
 in responsibility for the children.

Four of our senior children completed their schooling  
 in 1977 and have found employment or are attending Technical  
 College. Two of our children will sit for their Higher  
 School Certificate examinations this year. Two of our former  
 children were married during the year in St. Andrew's  
 Anglican Church. One of our former boys is now undergoing  
 training in the Department of Youth and Community Services -  
 the Department whose officers have set such a fine example  
 to our children over many years. We thank Mr. Tony Madden  
 and his colleagues in Lismore, Casino and Grafton for their  
 dedicated involvement. Another of our former boys is in second  
 year at Armidale Teachers College.

At present there are 24 boys and 22 girls in the  
 Home comprising five pre-schoolers, one at Technical College,  
 20 at High School and the remainder at infants and primary  
 level. As well, we have cared for some 60-70 children on a  
 temporary or crisis basis ranging from 24 hours to six weeks.  
 We are one of the few voluntary Homes which hold remand  
 licences and are proud of this further community service.

Staffing of the Home continues to be our biggest  
 problem and some solution must be found to lift the weight  
 of this from our Matron, Miss O'Neill. We were delighted  
 at the dual honours conferred upon Miss O'Neill this year  
 in the form of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal and the  
 British Empire Medal. Nobody is more deserving of these  
 honours. During the year Miss O'Neill attended three  
 conferences to keep herself up to date with latest trends.  
 She also successfully completed this year the Child Welfare  
 Residential Course.

The year began sadly for us with the death of  
 Dr. Ken Lawrance, a long-time member of the Executive.  
 This followed the death in the previous year of Mr. Don  
 Tucker and the magnificent work of these two staunch friends  
 and Committee members is to be commemorated by the renovation  
 and re-dedication of the Chapel in the Home for which a public  
 memorial appeal was opened. The work is being carried out by

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carpentry apprentices from Lismore Technical College under the supervision of Mr. Ken Davis and is nearing completion. The dedication will take place when Bishop Shearman returns from the Lambeth Conference.

I pay tribute to the staff who have supported Miss O'Neill in what has not been an easy year. We appreciate their dedication to child care work.

I also pay tribute to the members of the Committee. Their membership of the Executive of the Home may not be widely known outside those closely involved so I name them: Messrs. Dick Ward, Doug Mewing, Roly Heap, Roy Hepburn, Geoff Morton, Spencer Spinaze and John Langler and Dr. David Thomas. I also express our appreciation to our President, Rev. Mr. Alan Shephard on the completion of his first year as President. Mr. & Mrs. Shephard are no strangers to the Home and the transfer of presidency on the appointment of the Rev. Mr. McFarlane to Maclean Parish has seen a continuation of the wonderful assistance the Matron has received from the Rectory.

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Jack Riley  
Hon. Secretary  
24.7.78