

NSW could take 4000 Vietnam children,

We could have taken 4000 children from Vietnam, State Youth and Community Affairs Minister, Mr. Mauger, said in Lismore on Saturday.

Minister says

"We had processed 77 prospective foster parents before the Vietnam airlift," he said.

"Another 77 are being processed and there is a further 200 yet to be interviewed."

Mr. Mauger was speaking after he had inspected the North Coast Children's Home.

"You must realise the processing of parents who wish to adopt Vietnamese children is quite different from those wanting Australian children," Mr. Mauger said.

"Some people who have previously applied for Australian foster children are now asking to be re-processed to take a Vietnamese child.

"So far seven Vietnamese children have been released to foster parents.

"The parents are 'on probation' so to speak for an initial period to ascertain that they are the right parents for the child.

Emotional response

"Many people rushed to adopt Vietnamese children on purely emotional grounds, we realise this."

"But I am very proud of the way NSW people have opened their hearts.

"During the last decade we have adopted out 60 Vietnamese children."

Mr. Mauger and his wife were in Lismore to officially open the North Coast Children's Home Fete.

First to stay

He became the first Minister of the Crown to stay overnight at the home.

"I am terribly impressed with what I've seen," he said.

"If it wasn't for the splendid work being done here in Lismore the State

would have a much heavier financial burden."

Mr. Mauger held discussions with the home's supervisory committee.

Try for aid

Afterwards he said: "I will be making representations in an attempt to gain assistance for this home."

But he made it clear it was strictly on a no promises basis.

Mr. Mauger also held informal talks with more than half a dozen local youth and community welfare officers.

Supervisor praised

"You are among the most fortunate people in Australia to have a woman like Miss Jean O'Neill among you," Mr. Mauger said.

[Miss O'Neill is the supervisor of the North Coast Children's Home.]

"The work she has done, her attitude towards the children, impresses me immensely," he told 500 people at the fete opening.

"You don't know how lucky you are."

Mr. Mauger's remarks were some of many tributes paid to Miss O'Neill on Saturday.

"The people of Lismore have good reason to be proud of this home, those who operate it, and the great number of people in the city who help out in any way they can," he said.

The Minister for Youth and Community Services, Mr. Steve Mauger, passes scones to Joy Gibson, 3, from the North Coast Children's Home during afternoon tea at the home's fete.



Record proceeds despite rain

Ignoring showers and heavy rain, Lismore people paid out \$1819 at the North Coast Children's Home Fete on Saturday.

This was \$340 more than the previous best fete.

Hundreds of families ducked into St. Andrew's Parish Centre, between showers, to buy everything from potted ferns to an opportunity to dunk a "victim" in a 1000-gallon tank of cold water.

One attraction, a "ghost house" run by children, had more than 400 paying customers.

Organisers and church officials were elated with the financial success of the day.

Some had feared the weather and economic climate might combine to keep many away from the home's annual fund-raising venture.

"We couldn't have had a better day or a better crowd," officials said on Saturday night.

Running costs are expected to take less than five per cent of the record gross.

The fete was officially opened by the Minister for Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs, Mr. Steve Mauger.

He said many of Australia's finest citizens could be found in homes and institutions such as the North Coast Children's Home.

He claimed that in many cases, it should be the parents, not the children, who should have to live in institutions.

Finance difficult

Mr. Mauger said finance to run the institutions was not easy to come by.

"If places like your home here had to close, it would place a tremendous burden on the State," he said.

"What a credit these children are to the people who operate the home and especially to its supervisor, Miss O'Neill.

"The way the children behave, the way they keep their rooms tidy.

"They are a credit to the home and to themselves.

"Many people outside just don't realise just how much good is being done in these institutions," Mr. Mauger said.

Mr. Duncan paid glowing tributes to the work done by scores of Lismore people to help the children's home function.

Ald. Blair said: "The North Coast Children's Home has produced many fine citizens of Lismore.

"We are well aware of the dedication and work which is done to keep the home functioning."