

THOSE THREE R'S! HOMEWORK CENTRE AT LA PEROUSE THRIVES

Established in 1965, the Homework Centre at La Perouse Aboriginal Reserve, despite teething problems, is making a definite contribution to community life.

The Centre was set up under the Consultative Committee on Aboriginal Education, and caters for children from 4 to 15 years of age. It has been handling up to 60 children, the majority of them in the primary school age bracket.

Held every Tuesday from 6.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m., the Centre is staffed by a dedicated team of workers under the leadership of Mrs Kirsty Powell, of Cremorne, the Centre supervisor.

Until recently, the Centre had only the use of the Reserve Hall, resulting in accommodation problems because of the number of children and the wide age range. Now the Centre has obtained the additional use of the hostel by arrangement with the Aborigines Welfare Board, providing separate rooms for small groups of high school and primary children.

The number of teachers has increased from 1 to 20, with 8 teachers on duty each evening. The majority are trained teachers, but use is also made of adults with special skills.

The committee on the Reserve has fully supported the Centre, and has held joint meetings with the teaching staff. Two members of the committee are regular helpers at the Centre.

Varied Activities

It is hoped that much more help can be given with homework now that accommodation has improved. Play activities of various kinds have now been organized in the hall for younger children, such as block building, drawing, cutting, pasting, art, and puppets.

Older children have done work in English, Arithmetic, Social Studies, and Art. The main aim has been to help children enjoy these subjects. Films have been shown on two occasions.

Many people, including a number of schools, have donated books and there is now quite a good children's library though more books are needed and the library is inadequately housed. There has been an increasing interest in borrowing books over the past year and the organization of the library has been much improved. The library was kept open during the Christmas holidays when the rest of the Centre was closed.

The workers at the Centre feel that despite problems and inadequacies something useful is being done and a real need being met.

Footnote: The Centre has an ardent supporter in Mr Cliff Cooke, secretary of the La Perouse Committee. Mr Cooke said his daughter Gail showed marked improvement after attending the Centre, and last year topped her class.

