

ABORIGINAL FAMILY EDUCATION CENTRES ON THE MOVE

Below are extracts from the record of the second meeting of the Advisory Council, Bernard van Leer Foundation Project, held at the University of Sydney on the 16th June, 1970. The meeting was chaired by Mrs Eileen Lester, M.B.E.

Mrs Betty Munro (Tingha) Good morning. I am very pleased with the way the preschool has been coming along up there at Tingha. The children are all very keen and we are getting a few more each day. Not many of the mothers are interested, but the children still come anyway. Sometimes there are only two or three mothers. But after we get our building up and get a good go on, we know we are going to spread.

Mrs Lester I was up at Tingha a few weeks ago, and while Mrs Munro was working with the children we could see that there are no problems with the children and the families starting at the Centre, but there are problems with accommodation. They have arranged for a piece of ground near the mission and there is a building some nine miles away which we have been trying to get moved from one place to another where the families can use it. We are hoping in the near future to have this building moved so they can carry on with this work with the children. Meanwhile they are going ahead using little or no space—different homes and out-of-doors.

Mrs Julie Whitton (Toomelah) Well I think it is the best thing that ever happened to us to have a preschool. Up our way there are so many little ones and they never have anything to do.

Since the preschool started up they are really good. The mothers come along, a few of them at a time, but all the children come along. We get help from the people in town, and they put things in the papers about us and we were on television last week with the preschool. I think we will be able to get more help from the mothers now that they see what the children are doing. But I know I won't miss out on a session—I leave everything else I have got to do to go to preschool and I never miss one. We have one session every week and an extra one if anyone is coming. We get help from the teacher at the school now, whereas we didn't before. Fifteen miles away, over the border, we have been offered help from a teacher, and we are coming along well now.

Mrs Eileen McIntosh (Boggabilla) Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to speak on our problem, which is almost the same as that at Tingha. We have no building and there are some of our people up one end of town and some up the other end. Those at the far end of town have a transport problem, because the hall we use is up our end of town. Pat Troutman, who was down in Sydney at the time of the Queen's visit, runs one session up her end of town, and we have the problem of a building, or transport or both.