

*** THE BREAKFAST PROGRAMME— *** FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS . . .

At 8 a.m. each weekday morning 30-40 children assemble at a renovated building in the inner Sydney suburb of Chippendale for what is known as the "Breakfast Programme".

The programme is part of a voluntary scheme aimed at alleviating the nutritional and educational problems common among Aboriginal children, especially those in the inner city areas of Sydney.

The B.P. started when it was realized that many children were going to school on virtually an empty stomach. Not only did this increase their vulnerability to disease but it also adversely affected their educational interest and development.

In response to this situation Billy Craigie and Paul Coe approached the Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross. Shortly thereafter, in February of this year, a mobile caravan unit became available. Each morning the unit went to a park in Newtown where a hot breakfast was provided for local Aboriginal children.

Further support from the Wayside Chapel and the attendant publicity in the press lead to voluntary donations of food and money and ultimately a small government grant to help subsidize the service.

As winter came on weather conditions made the use of the mobile unit impractical and the

B.P. moved to a church hall in Newtown. In September a property in Shepherd Street was donated by a Sydney businessman for use over 2 years. The grant was made with the B.P. in mind and the property, "Murawina", at 72 Shepherd Street, was put under the control of a group of Aboriginal mothers.

Originally the morning routine was organized and carried out by Kay Edwards and a group of people from the Wayside Chapel. Recently more Aborigines, particularly mothers, have become involved in the running of the scheme, especially since Billy Craigie began working for the chapel as Aboriginal co-ordinator.

On a typical morning children begin gathering at "Murawina" soon after 7 o'clock. Half-an-hour later Kay and Billie arrive in a van with the morning's provisions. The van was donated to the Wayside Chapel by a large Sydney car dealer.

While breakfast is being prepared by Kay and several local people (some students, others parents) Billy takes the van around Chippendale, Redfern, and Newtown collecting the children. After a somewhat noisy and high-spirited 3-course meal the children are deposited back home in time for school.

Since the provision of the Shepherd Street property the activities of the B.P. organizers

The Breakfast Programme at work

