



Camp leader Bruce Mackay (standing) delivers his speech of welcome to visitors at the official opening of the house. Next to him are Mr and Mrs Ellis, and on the extreme left is Mr Ian Mitchell, Director of Aboriginal Welfare

(Photo courtesy Barraba Gazette)

CHRISTIAN YOUTH WORK CAMP AT BARRABA

Each year a non-denominational group of young Christians spends 3 weeks in a New South Wales country town, building houses for rental to Aboriginal families.

This year the group, known as the Christian Youth Work Camp, built two homes, one at Barraba and another at Ashford.

The home at Barraba was built for Mr and Mrs Gerard Ellis and their family. Prior to this the Ellis family had been living with other Aboriginal families in Barraba's crowded caravan park, awaiting construction of Housing Commission homes.

About sixty members of the Christian Youth Work Camp arrived in Barraba on Boxing Day to begin the task of building the house. Work began at lot 21 Douglas Street at 7.30 a.m. and by the end of the first day the timber frame was up.

Work on the house was always ahead of schedule, although that is not to say that the volunteers did nothing but drive nails and fight off flies. The working day was a mixture of good humour and more often than not ended in barbecues at the local swimming pool, dancing and singing.

The building materials were supplied by the Department of Child and Social Welfare through the Housing Commission. The campers pay their own travelling and accommodation expenses and supply their own tools.

Since the time of its inception the work camp has built homes for Aborigines in such towns as Dubbo, Gilgandra, Inverell, Bega, Moree, Gunnedah, Bowraville, Narromine, Walgett, and Casino.

Speaking of the Barraba project camp leader Bruce Mackay said, "We had a lot of fun building, but the campers have worked really hard".

Their work was rewarded when the four-bedroom, timber-fibro house was completed. The house, valued at between \$12,000 and \$15,000 and of modern design with all conveniences, is now in the hands of the N.S.W. Housing Commission for rental and maintenance.

About 200 people gathered on a rainy day for the official opening of the home, which was attended by the Director of Aboriginal Welfare, Mr Ian Mitchell.

"To the people of Barraba," said Bruce Mackay at the opening, "we leave you with another house in Douglas Street and with this commission—to fully accept these people into your community. You too must play your part in making this house a home".

Accepting the keys to his family's new home Mr Ellis said, "I can't thank the Christian Youth Work Camp enough for building this house for us".