A CASE STUDY IN THE PRACTICE OF

SOCIAL INTERVENTION

Government Intervention in Aboriginal Affairs

(Victoria) 1834 — 1972

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The study is of the social intervention programmes undertaken by government in the State of Victoria with respect to the original inhabitants of that territory, the Aborigines. The study describes selectively and briefly some early programmes from 1834 to 1957 noting the existence of value conflicts, the resulting dilemmas and the compromises which ultimately produced these programmes. It is argued that these programmes were at best only partially successful in resolving some of the dilemmas, and in so doing created new ones for the future. It is also argued that they were programmes not aimed at resolving the problems in social functioning which existed for the Aborigines but were designed to effect social control, the goal sought being the conversion of the Aborigines from their way to the European one.

In 1957 the fragmentary residual administration could no longer cope with the problem and pressure groups forced a government enquiry subsequently referred to as the McLean report. As a result the Aborigines Welfare Board was established. The study examines in considerable detail the policy and programmes of this administration through selective use of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative processes, and it is argued that for such a study the data must relate to the problem. Some of the categories of data include the historical record, government files, public comment in the press, parliamentary debate, economic, statistical and demographic records. It is noted that the focus of this administration shifts to the individual Aboriginal person and family and expresses primary concern in resolving their problems of social functioning. For the first time professional social workers are employed. As an effective broad aim intervention programme the Aborigines Welfare Board programme suffered from a number of significant flaws, however, it recognised its inability to come to grips with the dimensions of the task as it had come to perceive them and took steps which led to new legislation in 1967.

The study takes up from 1968-1972 a further detailed examination of the new Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and notes its use of the experience of the preceding decade. The study records the nature of the changes in interventive strategy developed by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the significantly greater effectiveness it was able to achieve.

The study then makes an analysis, comparing and contrasting the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs administrations and draws a limited number of conclusions in the form of hypotheses about broad-spectrum social intervention programmes. The total thus forms a case study in the practice of social intervention with more intensive study of the period 1957-72.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is essential to note that considerable assistance was given by members of the staff of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in compiling data for this study, and while they are in no way responsible for any of my mistakes or conclusions I was very grateful for their help.

The most significant individual to influence this study was the Director of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, during 1969-72, Mr. M. R. Worthy, who must accept responsibility for creating the philosophy and practice on which the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is based and thus inadvertently influencing me to record from the excitement of those years my view of what the intervention programmes of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs were all about. Ultimately, however, I accept full responsibility for all the opinions expressed.

I am grateful to Mr. Leonard Tierney, my supervisor over five of the seven years this thesis has been in process; he provided encouragement during the many periods when my inclination was to relinquish the unequal struggle between full-time work and part-time study. He also provided fresh perspectives on the study, which one needs when working alone for long periods.
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A number of specific statements need to be made to clarify some of the usage in this study.

From time to time throughout the text the terms 'European' and 'non-Aboriginal' will be used interchangeably. This reflects the author's inability to satisfactorily resolve in his own mind the most appropriate terminology.

A further slightly confusing concept is that of system and sub-system, and on occasion these two terms are used interchangeably. In 1835 it is reasonably safe to state that there are two interacting systems, viz., European and Aboriginal. By 1958 in Victoria these are probably more appropriately designated sub-systems, but there is not sufficient significance in the two terms to be unduly pedantic about proper usage.

Throughout the text there has been an attempt to be consistent in the use of terms. However, on one issue I have chosen to depart from this practice. It is preferred in science that the use of the first person pronoun "I" be eschewed. This is, I believe, due to the desire to portray or convey a picture of objectivity free from personal bias. The practice does not, of itself, ensure that this will be the case and may in fact be misleading. In a social work study of this nature the personal involvement and effect of the author is so significantly present that it has been my choice to avoid excessive or exclusive use of the objective impersonal usage on those occasions when I felt moved to do so by the nature of the material. Thus, in a literal sense, the text will appear to lack that consistency which many prefer.

The study is predicated by an unstated assumption which also bears on the data. It is assumed throughout, that in Victoria, by 1957 at least, any notions of traditional culture are irrelevant. It is assumed that all traditional culture was lost by that time and that remnants of the traditional culture were not influencing what can be observed. There are those who do not agree with this assumption. I believe, however, that very few of the conclusions reached would be altered if my assumption could be shown to be false.

In Victoria in 1972 there are no more than a small number of persons wholly descended from original inhabitants, that is, full-bloods. Most Aborigines are part-Aboriginal/part European. The term part-Aboriginal is used to differentiate these people from other part-Europeans who probably comprise a considerable portion of the population. The term half-caste, however, is only used when quoted from official documents as it has some local derogatory connotations and is, in any case, socially and culturally meaningless in Victoria.
INTRODUCTION

The area presently designated as the State of Victoria was entirely populated by full-blood tribal Aborigines until 1832 when the first white settlers arrived. From that time until the present, there have been difficulties in the relationship between the two races. It is generally estimated by Jones¹ that in 1788 there were about 13,500 Aborigines in about twenty-seven tribes. In 1972 there were believed to be about 6,300² Aborigines in Victoria fewer than ten of whom were believed to be full-blood and none of whom were tribal. Between 1843 and 1972 the government responsible for the land area known today as the State of Victoria has legislated continuously for some form of government instrumentality to accept varying kinds of responsibility for the relationship between these indigenous people and the white incoming population.

During the period 1957 to 1967 the Victorian government established and maintained the Aborigines Welfare Board; the author was employed by that Board between 1964 and 1966. In 1967 the Victorian government repealed the Act establishing the Aborigines Welfare Board and introduced legislation setting up a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. This Ministry lasted until 1974 when the Australian (Commonwealth) government took over. The author was employed by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for three years, first as Supervising Social Worker and later as Assistant Director, between 1969 and 1972.

This study examines in some detail the nature of government intervention between 1957 and 1972 and considers some of the consequences of the intervention policies and programmes. This work is basically a case study of the two organizations, focusing on them as the agents of government implementing intervention programmes in an area of complex social problems.

The Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs were chosen because of the author's familiarity with their work, because of the availability of data and because the two departments functioned differently in their attempts to come to grips with the problems that existed.

This is a piece of social work research, so its focus is on the interventive process in all of its complexity.

Consideration is given to:

An evaluation of the two programmes basically in terms of their effort, effectiveness and efficiency.

Some things that seem to have been learned from the study about the nature of broad-aim intervention programmes (especially those dealing with complex social issues) in the form of hypotheses to be taken up and tested elsewhere.
To establish a perspective on these two programmes a brief examination is made of government intervention in Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria during the period 1832 to 1957.

End Notes


CHAPTER 1 METHOD CONSIDERATIONS

The goals of the study will be stated. Before outlining the details of the case study method used to reach them, some consideration is given to issues relevant to social work research.

GOALS OF THE STUDY

1. To document significant aspects of a social intervention programme that has persisted more or less continuously since 1834; to show how that process has proceeded in its attempts to cope with a complex social problem; to show that the efforts of government to deal with the problem left the problem still unresolved in 1957 and to speculate on some of the reasons for this and to assay what has been learned from the various attempts.

2. To study in considerable detail the last two Victorian government attempts, i.e., of the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to cope with 'the Aboriginal Problem' and compare and contrast them in such a way as to attempt to derive some hypotheses about broad-aim social intervention programmes.

METHOD ISSUES

An approach that appears in many ways to be generally superior to experimental design for evaluating broad-aim programmes is one that might be characterised as multi-dimensional, using:

(a) Process-oriented qualitative research processes, which emphasise the type of data to be collected — although there is no need to exclude quantitative data.

(b) Historical research processes, which emphasise a concern with the development of events through time; and

(c) Case study and comparative research processes, which emphasise the use of a single case or small set of cases as a basis for generalisation to a larger class. The aim of the approach is to develop a coherent and comprehensive description —
(i) of the relevant community systems before the intervention;
(ii) the form taken by the intervention;
(iii) the new systems which develop; and
(iv) incorporating the intervention as a dynamic constituent.

Applied Evaluative Research

In seeking for solutions to methodology in the area of programme evaluation, Suchman¹ was significant in that he focussed tightly on the specific issue of evaluation of welfare programmes:

The primary objective of basic research is the discovery of knowledge, the proof or disproof of an hypothesis. No administrative action is usually contemplated or need follow: the major criterion of the 'success' of a basic research project is the scientific validity of its findings, inherently involving an evaluation against the rules of scientific methodology.
But evaluative research is generally applied or administrative research, the primary objective of which is to determine the extent to which a given programme or procedure is achieving some desired result. The ‘success’ of an evaluation project will be largely dependent upon its usefulness to the administrator in improving services. Thus, while scientific criteria may determine the degree of confidence one may place on the findings of an evaluation study, administrative criteria will play an even larger role in determining the worthwhileness of the study having been done. Unlike the basic researcher, the applied researcher must be constantly aware of the potential utility of his findings.

Some Observations on Method in Science: Exploration vs. Hypothesis testing, Qualitative vs. Quantitative Considerations

My thinking has been further influenced by Kuhn, when he suggests that paradigms, which he describes as: ‘Universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners’, may not exist in the social sciences as they do in the natural sciences. Kaplan also supports this notion and suggests that in fact not ‘scientific method’ but ‘the problem under investigation’ should dictate the methods of investigation.

Based on considerable pre-knowledge about the problem and knowledge of the kind of data required, the purpose of hypothesis-testing is to establish relationships between variables which usually aim to validate a theory. Social Work theory has not yet reached this point.

Once exploratory work has located significant variables then it becomes possible to formulate hypotheses which can be designed to test relationships between the variables. Without adequate exploratory work it is extraordinarily difficult to establish meaningful testable hypotheses. So, much of the work of this study is devoted to explicating some significant variables.

To collect and assemble data for this study, the author followed the principle that the nature of the data should be permitted to dictate what would be collected and how. This was not a study in which variables were manipulated to bring about some finite or specific outcome which could be tabulated and subjected to appropriate tests of significance. The issue of establishing the validity of the data to be relevant to the uncovering of the proposed solution to the problem is dealt with at face value. This means that if it appears reasonable on inspection, if it is logical, and if, in fact, there are several different sources which support the proposition so that it can be considered reliable, then it has been considered to have sufficient substance to permit its use in this study. In any further study to test the model and develop it further, more stringent applications of routine hypothesis testing and quantitative experimental procedures would be helpful in making the outcomes of such study more widely acceptable. The writer does not believe that, to quote a colleague, “there is any value in measuring trivia with sanctimonious precision”. Kaplan makes the point when he refers to the ‘mystique of quantity’ which takes the form of an exaggerated regard for the significance of measurement just because it is quantitative, without regard either for what has to be measured or to what can subsequently be done with the measure.
The nature of evidence should be relevant to the nature of the problem. However, where statistical and quantitative data are available, and where they increase the potency of the argument, then they have been used. Each of the two models of science have their role; the first to explore and recognise ideas that provide the basis for theory, models and hypotheses; the second, to test hypotheses. While inevitably the two continuously interact there is about the first a general preference for qualitative work, as there is in the second a general preference for quantitative work.

I would like to buttress this position a little by quoting from Hill speaking on the relevance of methodology. He is referring to sociology but the same point applies to social work. He says:

A man's work in methodology tends to be appraised in terms of its precision, its simple elegance, and its logical consistency... These are appropriate criteria for judging the work of a mathematician or logician. They are not fully adequate to evaluate the efforts of a methodologist working within sociology... where... methodological developments ought to be judged in terms of their contribution to the solution of the theoretical and substantive problems of the discipline rather than in terms of their abstract elegance.

Two Opposing Views of Evaluation and Broad-Aim Programmes

It is interesting to record the opinions of two diametrically opposed exponents of the evaluation of 'broad-aim' or social action programmes. Both writers are referring to the same type of programmes, in fact to the same programmes, those associated with the American poverty programme.

Weiss & Rein state:

In the evaluation of broad-aim programmes, experimental design creates technical and administrative problems so severe as to make the evaluation of questionable value. A more historically oriented, more qualitative evaluation has greater value. The experimental model has been criticised... However, only Schulburg & Baker (1968) have agreed with the position taken here that the experimental model is intrinsically unsuitable to the evaluation of broad-aim programmes. Even among critics of experimental design for programme evaluation this is a minority position.

On the other side Suchman suggests:

... Social research techniques for the collection and analysis of data are fully applicable to the study of planned social change — which is basically what is involved in current national and international social action programmes. These programmes constitute social 'experiments' worthy of the serious attention of social theorists and methodologists. They hold the promise of successful development of an 'experimental' sociology in which the intervening variable so prominent in non-evaluative research becomes in actuality a form of social intervention.
In time these two positions can be expected to merge into a middle of the road position which takes account of more of the total reality than is presently usual in studies of complex programmes.

Opportunity for Evaluation of Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria
Due to the irony of circumstances the government's Aboriginal affairs authorities have provided over the years an active social science laboratory. True, some of the controls may appear somewhat deficient, some of the variables a little blurred. However:

(i) It has changed its programme from time to time and there are records before and after.
(ii) It has undertaken field enquiries and supported these from time to time.
(iii) It has periodically restated its objectives and regularly reported on its functions.
(iv) It has been willing to be studied if someone was prepared to take the time and trouble to try to do so without the clear intention of being destructively critical.

Support from Social Work Practice for the Use of Multiple Data Sources for Studying and Planning Social Intervention Programmes
There are no very definitive definitions of social work research. Perhaps this is because most of the research undertaken by social workers has either been of a semi-statistical survey or descriptive nature, related to novel intervention projects; for example, Tierney and Overton & Associates, or it has been an assessment of the more traditional social work intervention models, more formal and using the traditional framework of experimental design, for example Kogan and Geismar. One of the notable exceptions is a study by Donovan, which examines welfare services in Western Australia on a very broad set of exploratory concepts.

No great perspicacity is required to judge that there exist real deficiencies in the arrangements established by society for the planning and implementation of programmes specifically concerned with the existence of Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Designing and implementing feasible programmes that will provide lines of action, the outcome of which will be satisfactory, not only to those implementing the programmes but to those for whom the programmes are designed, poses special problems for social welfare planners. The study of a social problem does not provide of itself the basis for a programme of intervention, this comes later. The role of the social worker has been traditionally in the interventive area and this requires the application of values and techniques whose efficacy needs to be established and for which justification will ultimately be that they changed the situation in the desired direction; keeping in mind the contentious issue of who was desiring the direction.

Problem situations need, at least, to be described. To evaluate programmes requires values to be placed on programme goals. To experiment with different programmes and evaluate their efficacy assumes that hypotheses relevant to the issues can be clearly and definitively stated, usually in advance. This implies awareness of the nature of the
problems and the ability to ask appropriate questions. In Aboriginal affairs this has proven not an easy matter. The elucidation of appropriate questions has often been eschewed in favour of acting on the expedient problem of the moment; what Lindblom would probably have seen as an instance of bad decision making using successive limited comparisons, that is 'muddling through' without understanding the values or implications. It is possible, however, to analyse the implications of these decisions and to evaluate their efficacy by studying the problem in the context of the interventive decisions made and considering outcomes in the light of the objectives. Essentially this means studying the recorded history of the period through the documents available to determine inductively the nature of the models being used, and the assumptions made by the various participants. This is not the most precise of scientific processes but it is realistic. As Tierney has suggested; 'The role of hunches or sudden insights may not be ruled out, but to allocate these solitary and paramount status would be to go against all the lessons of scientific enquiry'.

Another serious issue in considering research methodology in social work is the decision as to what constitutes social work's area of uniqueness. Necessarily social work borrows concepts and theories as well as models from cognate disciplines, especially sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science and statistics. Its uniqueness relates to the area of intervention in social life, its questions relate to its theory and practice, and so social work researchers have tended to seek their data in the area of contact between those generally referred to as 'clients' and the persons and agencies providing 'help'. This means examining the practice itself and records kept by organizations about the helping process. Data relevant to the helping process relates to planning and this often means undertaking demographic or organizational studies. The history of the client group and/or its contact with the 'helpers' is consequently both relevant and significant. This study uses knowledge and data from these areas.

As a side issue, it is remarkable how frequently insight and understanding about less explicit areas of the intervention process is gained from social novelists. In Aboriginal affairs for sensitive historical perspective, Dark and Durack; for intervention strategies, Stuart; and for sensitivity of the urban Aboriginal situation, Gare and Strehlow. Perhaps the reason these social commentators are so significant to the social work researcher is their unique relationship to their data. They tend to cast light on the scene from an angle tangential to that available to the practitioner/researcher and thus broaden his perspective. Further, they are themselves influential in modifying the attitudes of the community toward the people about whom they write, and this is a role rarely considered in welfare studies.

One of the difficulties in planning for intervention is that the programme needs to be based on a picture of the situation which takes into consideration the relevant factors, whatever they may be. The social worker, however, frequently does not have access to many areas of the lives of people in their situations. His perspective is therefore limited, the data he collects is frequently believed by him to be more comprehensive than in fact it is. Thus in Aboriginal affairs there could be a tendency to assume that the case records and subject files of the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of
Aboriginal Affairs give a fair picture of the life situation of Aborigines in Victoria. The social work researcher must perceive that the social worker frequently has limited access to the life of the Aboriginal community, tends to be involved more with the specific problems of Aboriginal families than the normal daily life situations, tends to be more relevant to Aborigines as a person in the crises than in the harmonies of life. Thus the necessity exists for the social work researcher to use the totality of data sources, whatever they may be, when building up the picture from which intervention will ultimately be planned.

Tierney suggests that the social work theorist needs to secure accurate pictures of the situations in which individuals for whom he plans intervention respond and act. It is this reality that forces the social work researcher to use extensive sources for data collection. This data has rarely been obtained 'scientifically', that is with an eye to its accuracy and comprehensiveness. So a variety of qualitative, semi-quantitative and quantitative methods are used in the hope that reliability can be established by cross checking from several different sources and that the final picture of the situation so derived will be close enough to the actual situation and that the interventive procedure developed will work.

The issue of planning is further complicated by the realities of previous decision-making. In Aboriginal affairs interventive action has been planned mainly by established bureaucracies. They have used the method of successive limited comparison, where means and ends are not distinct, because in the government developed organization a 'good' policy or decision is one that various actors find themselves agreeing with. The alternative, where policy formulation is derived through means-ends analysis, is less common because of the real difficulties in the situation. This latter process, referred to as the 'rational-comprehensive method' requires that the ends be first isolated and then the means to achieve them sought. Here 'the test of a 'good' policy is that it can be shown to be THE MOST APPROPRIATE means to the desired ends.' 21

There exists the danger of selectivity, resulting from limited access to all the data. The probability that intervention will be based on limited data and the likelihood that selective and limited data will be used for the development of planning frameworks is a problem in all interventive professions. For the social planner and the social work researcher, these issues are very sensitive ones. As Myrdal states; 'The most fundamental methodological problems facing the social scientist are therefore, what is objectivity, and how can the student attain objectivity in trying to find out the facts and the causal relationships between the facts?'

Another significant issue in establishing an appropriate methodology for research in the field of intervention relates to the focus of those who collect and supply much of the data. Social work research and research focussed on the planning for social intervention usually develops as a result of prior activity proving less conclusive or satisfactory than was hoped. The motives and realities of social action usually dictate that the 'problem' be tackled; be it orphaned children, retarded or disabled children or adults, Housing Commission tenants dissatisfied with the Housing Commission, or Aborigines. Pressure groups usually act on the immediate problem to get some sort of service going. The
emotive pressures usually demand action programmes first. When these have become routinized to some extent it seems to become possible to consider them in a more objective way. By this stage some data are available from the efforts of those who were initially involved in dealing with the situation. However, the focus for subjective or other reasons has usually been on the individuals who needed help. This has meant that the focus of activity and perspective has been on the unique qualities and circumstances of a number of specific individuals. This has been the case in Aboriginal affairs, even when the broad focus was on a collective or group. The action quickly became focussed on the specific individuals and families and, therefore, the primary records came to be the case records of these individuals and families. Only slowly and partially did general data about the situation as a whole begin to emerge. The researcher is therefore typically faced with either basing his analysis on the one or two levels of analysis available through the data at hand or seeking a broader source of data on which to develop less constrained perspectives. This study has chosen to use a wide range of data sources, accepting their partiality and incompleteness. Such a choice inevitably has serious implications for the rigour of the methodology and a balance between rigour and understanding needs to be established.

**Practitioner as Researcher, Insider/Outsider Status**

'People, not their eyes, see. Cameras, and eye-balls, are blind.' 23

In 1958, as part of the requirement for Social Work II, I had undertaken a detailed study of every voluntary welfare organization established in Victoria to help Aborigines.24 I had participated in the National Union of Australian University Students Aboriginal Scholarship Scheme as Director in 1957 and 1958, and had worked for two years with the Aborigines Welfare Board, 1964-66, organized and been involved in running two Aboriginal scholarship schemes between 1966 and 1969, and at that stage joined the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as Supervising Social Worker, leaving the organisation in 1972 as Assistant Director. In a sense, then, I was an insider rather than an outsider in the field. While it is occasionally suggested in the literature that there are some real advantages in being an outsider, for example Trice in Philstead25, there are those who go further and suggest that the insider is excessively blinkered by his belonging.

One's status as an insider or outsider depends upon the perspective in which the researcher is perceived. In this study I am an outsider in that I am not an Aborigine, but an insider in that I am writing about intervention in Aboriginal affairs and have been intermittently involved in that area for 15 years.

**CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHOD AND SELECTION OF DATA**

The case study approach was chosen as most appropriate because the two programmes are in fact two cases or two facets of the one case of government social intervention in Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria over a specific period of time. As has been mentioned it is due to the researcher's interest and experience in the field that Aboriginal Affairs was chosen and because of his easy access to the major data sources.
Methodological considerations regarding the actual procedures adopted for data collection are, as I have stressed several times, bound to be related to the concepts being used and the perceived nature of the problem being studied, as well as the researcher's assumptions about knowledge and how it is legitimately extended. When only a few variables highly specifiable are involved the method of choice for research design may well be the experimental method and a number of attempts have been made in Aboriginal affairs to use such an approach — see, for example, Dawson26 and Lickiss27 — but they were not directed primarily to establishing intervention programmes. In the effort to develop such a programme on a wide front it has been argued that qualitative methodology and analysis will necessarily constitute a significant part of the method used. One of the methodological advantages of this type of study is the very diversity of the data. Thus the historical approach to the intervention situation has been carried to the microsocial level of individual families in case illustrations. Here the researcher finds value in the areas the case histories light up only tangentially, what Becker28 refers to as 'neighbouring fact'. Attempt is made to study longitudinally the situation with one family and information is revealed from several case studies of the same period that is generally referred to as cross-sectional, lighting up with more intensity an aspect of a current situation.

The Aborigines Welfare Board 1958-1968
There were nine potential sources of data from which to draw information about the Aborigines Welfare Board. These were:

1. The annual reports of the Board.
2. The filing system that existed in 1969 when I was seeking basic data, was, to say the least, scrappy. It had been totally re-organized for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and much of the original data had been relocated or discarded and, as such, the original subject files were of little value.
3. The case records, however, had been maintained in more or less their original form and were of considerable value.
4. The minutes of the Aborigines Welfare Board were informative about the formal administration of a significant part of the Aborigines Welfare Board operation but not about the staff operation.
5. There were a number of policy and other documents that went with the minutes of the Board that were of considerable assistance, especially when it came to understanding the changing philosophy of the Board as time passed.
6. Next, the fact that I had been employed as a Welfare Officer during the 1964-65 period meant that I had diaries of the two years and considerable inside knowledge of the staff operation of the Aborigines Welfare Board.
7. There was also the record created by the news media which had been assiduously kept by Miss Brown from the Victorian Aboriginal Group in hundreds of folders, as well as the morgues maintained by the various newspapers themselves. Numerous country papers ran stories during the years but these, with the exception of the Framlingham story in the Warrnambool Standard, were not pursued. Virtually none of this media record has been used as it requires a quite separate study with a rather different focus.
8. There is some information in the parliamentary record during the period, but not a great deal.

9. There is a significant amount of written commentary from people involved in voluntary organizations who believed that the Aborigines Welfare Board was misguided in its approach to the solution of Aboriginal 'problems' or 'the Aboriginal problem' as they frequently referred to it.

I have chosen to use the limited subject file (2) and the case file record (3), the minutes of the Aborigines Welfare Board (4), the Annual Reports (1) and my diaries and experiences with the Board (6).

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 1968-72
When it came to data collection for the duration of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs period, the departmental records were more extensive, better indexed, more comprehensive. I selected from many thousand records and several hundred thousand items those which best illustrated what had occurred in practice and which illustrated the process of the organization and what was going on.

As a practitioner, I was constantly being called on to verify economic and other records; to compile for planning tabulations about housing, health, education and other programmes; to examine how staff were using their time; to determine the adequacy of resources for future needs. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was forward-looking and as a practitioner and researcher this was extremely facilitative.

For data on the Ministry I drew on similar sources to the Board but in addition I was given access to the records of voluntary organizations; I undertook a fully computerised census using the internal record system in 1970-71 and I was able to have numerous staff research studies made on which I drew as well as being able to use material from research commissioned by the department.

This study, then, is an original piece of work in so far as the collection, selection and organization of relevant data illustrates the interventive process as it was implemented during the period under study.
End Notes — Chapter 1


7. Suchman, PP.176-177.


   " " " Dark and White Australians* (Melb., 1957).

   " " " Nomads in No-Man’s Land* (Adelaide, 1960).


21. Lindblom, P.293.


23. Attributed to an Anonymous scholar.


CHAPTER 2 ORIENTING CONCEPTS

The study uses as its major theoretical orientation a systems approach to social policy and planning.

In order to understand the problem situation and the interventive activity, the chapter begins with a brief review of some very general aspects of the 130 or so years of government activity. This is followed by several concepts (referred to as orienting concepts) which the author found valuable in organizing his thoughts about the various Aboriginal intervention programmes. A model for the study of organization goals is used as is a taxonomy of needs relevant to the service delivery area. Some work done on exchange theory and comparison levels helps explicate what is 'going on' in the Aboriginal/white contact process and a concept of residual and institutional services is used which helps fit the various government organizations into meaningful periods. These orienting concepts are a kind of large 'mind-hold' that has enabled me to understand and feel in control of a substantial portion of the data. Without such tools the mass of detailed data becomes overwhelming and the wood is hidden by the trees.

To then face the task of analysing the data demanded a much more substantial framework and this was supplied by systems concepts. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to an outline of several of the major concepts from systems theory and the significance of these concepts is illustrated with material from the period 1957 to 1972.

INTRODUCTION

For more than a century after 1834, Aboriginal intervention remained a pragmatic process. It was guided by political pressures, first from England and then from the pioneers and squatters in the fast developing colony and from the Church missionaries. It was influenced by the bureaucrats and the protectors; by the men of goodwill and others, and finally, but nearly always in the background, by the actions and voices of the Aborigines themselves. Aboriginal intervention programmes and legislation are seen primarily as the outcome of dilemmas usually created by a conflict of values. By the 1930's and 1940's the value orientation of the community toward 'the disadvantaged' was undergoing major change, aided by the experience of people who lived through the depression. The community had begun to accept the possibility that individuals in a modern urban society could be unable to support themselves, not because of their personal inadequacy, but because of social events and circumstances beyond their control.
By 1957 notions of welfare services overtook and replaced those of protection on which previous policy had been based. The philosophy and technology, however, were still inadequate for the task of resolving the problems. There remained a significant gap between the welfare needs and the welfare resources that were being made available in Victoria. In 1967 a further step was taken; the needs/resources gap was closed and the knowledge and technology for planning and handling the problem was available at the same time as the political climate was ready to establish a welfare structure appropriate for it.

The strategies of the first 120 years, i.e. from 1834 - 1957, were haphazard and reflect considerable conflict (or perhaps lack of congruence) in relation to the goals of policy. The strategies of the next ten years were tentative, as they struggled to come to grips with the central issues and problems. The goals from 1957 - 1967 came to be more clearly defined and as they were, so too did the gap between needs and resources become more visible. The strategies of the next four years were more confident, realistic and effective, defining the problem clearly and taking into account sufficient of the reality and complexity to use professionals and professional skills to some demonstrable effect. The objectives were more clearly delineated. Further redefinition of the situation will occur, but it is unlikely, and unnecessary, that future intervention take place in the same atmosphere of confusion and frustration that characterised so much of earlier Victorian Aboriginal intervention History.

The Aborigines Protection Boards were small bodies which met with varying degrees of regularity and which held direct control over a small staff of untrained protectors. Members' claim to a position on the Board was usually by formal status or expressed interest. The Aborigines Welfare Board established a very small government welfare organization. It consisted of a handful of professional and sub-professional welfare staff and administrators subject to the unpredictable authority of an executive lay Board which met monthly to direct action and establish policy. The judgment implied here about the unpredictability of the Board is heavily substantiated in the minutes of the Board which show decisions affecting individuals, families and whole settlement communities made at one monthly meeting and communicated to the persons concerned, overturned at the subsequent monthly meeting and on at least two notable occasions changed twice more in the ensuing six months. The Aborigines Welfare Board, however, was constructed to represent the welfare interests in the community. The superintendent was structurally powerless in much the same fashion as had the protectors been in the previous era. The Board came under the political 'pot pourri' of the Chief Secretary's Department for some matters and under the Minister for Housing for others. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was established as a self-contained department whose Director was responsible to a Minister with portfolio. Policy and administration for the Ministry lay in one direct line with access to Cabinet. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was not starved of resources but had access to Federal as well as State funds. It had a professional Social Worker as its chief executive officer and a fully professional social work and welfare staff of adequate size.
The Aborigines Protection Board had access to only a limited amount of knowledge about the Aboriginal population, their situation or their needs, and saw little need for any more information than was available. It began with almost no knowledge about the Aborigines in Victoria, neither their history, their needs, the pattern of their relationships nor their culture. Further, their actions were predicated on an estimate of numbers that accounted for approximately 20% of the actual population. When the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was established there was a vastly more realistic assessment of the population and the conditions under which Aborigines lived. More of their history and culture was known, a more realistic assessment of the needs of the community could be made, and a significant degree of contact had been established.

During the era of the Protection Boards rapid settlement ensured extensive contact with the Aborigines. This led to rapid extinction not only of the population as a whole but of the traditional culture of those remaining. One of the consequences was that by the time the Aborigines Welfare Board was established there were only a dozen or so fullbloods remaining in the state. As yet there were few expectations by Aborigines that they would be able to participate in European cultural activities, but by the era of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 1968, not only was there expectation, there was demand. Aborigines as a group had developed greater political optimism during the 1960's and as they were awakened to the desirable possibilities in the society around them, so too did many more perceive the invidiousness of their situation. The patterns of pressure controlling change were being changed not only by this awareness but by the spirit of the time which insisted on the right of such minorities to full equality.

During the earlier period of the Aborigines Protection Board the existence of traditional culture, including language, the process of extinction and the ongoing conflict between the squatters and the Aborigines for the right to use of land were crucial issues. By 1957 they were no longer relevant issues at all. The issues in 1957 were focussed around the very poor physical circumstances in which the Aborigines in Victoria were living and the consequences for their children and for the European communities around them. The Aboriginal population was increasing. By 1967 it had become clear that a mere focus on the poor physical circumstances of the Aboriginal communities was to entirely miss the real issue, which pertained to the status of the Aboriginal people themselves.

Prior to 1957 then, the Aborigines were seen as some kind of inferior aliens who would ultimately become extinct. After 1957 they were the recipients of residual welfare programmes and by 1967 they were citizens with a right to full equality and special assistance from the state.

Because social work is a practice-oriented profession, social work researchers are usually concerned with interventive processes. Research should be able to examine interventive practices with a view to developing practice-theory, increase the future effectiveness of interventive actions and evaluate the effects of interventive programmes. The social work profession has drawn extensively on theory from cognate disciplines.
to develop its interventive processes and usually no one theoretical perspective has been adequate to cover all aspects of the area.

**MAJOR CONCEPTUAL AREAS**

This study of interventive programmes in Victorian Aboriginal affairs is — as has been stated earlier — primarily focussed on the major intervention agency — the Government Aboriginal affairs department as it has functioned in its various forms since 1834. While systems concepts provide the main conceptual framework for the study, a number of other concepts have been selected because they have proven helpful in clarifying and organizing parts of the data. They are:

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives or goals of an organization may be clearly visible or not and there may be a high degree of consensus about the goals or there may not be. A neat and simple model for considering objectives has been devised by Donnison & Chapman and has been applied to some aspects of the situation. It uses the concept of four types of goals —

(i) manifest (the officially approved version);
(ii) extant (the reality);
(iii) requisite (recommends — or what ought be);
(iv) assumed (the interpretation offered by the individuals concerned).

**NEEDS**

The idea of NEEDS is inevitably relevant to the consideration of any social issue. A useful taxonomy has been developed by Bradshaw. He perceived four types of need:

(i) Normative (what the expert defines as need, a desirable standard is laid down and what exists compared with it).
(ii) Felt need (here need is equated with want).
(iii) Expressed need (is felt need turned into action and total need is defined as those people who demand a service).
(iv) Comparative need (here need is the gap established between what services exist in one area and what in another.

**EXCHANGE THEORY AND COMPARISON LEVELS**

To examine the relationship between Europeans and Aborigines Dawson has applied the concept of exchange theory developed by Thibaut & Kelly and later by Secord & Backman and tied these concepts in with that of ‘comparison levels’. An epigrammatical statement of the implications of this notion for the social worker concerned with intervention might be ‘things get worse as they get better’. Dawson argues, and has to some extent demonstrated, that as the comparison level of Aborigines rises, i.e. as they begin to see themselves as more Western than traditional (which happens as they become more urbanized) they also become more dissatisfied vis-a-vis their disadvantaged position in relation to Whites, especially in regard to their access to resources and opportunities and with the way they are being treated.
RESIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

To translate an essentially chronological interventive history into a welfare framework, a concept from Wilenski & Lebeau\(^6\) has been adapted. They speak of 'residual' and 'institutional' services. 'Residual' services are those welfare services offered to citizens of an industrial society who through illness, personal inadequacy, etc., are unable to support themselves or be supported by their families and cannot thus meet their minimal obligations for independence. People who have dropped outside the coping system are offered services to assist them to survive and these services are a privilege supported by those who are competent (who work).

They speak of 'Institutional' services as those arising from an awareness that social conditions can influence the ability of individuals to meet their economic and family responsibilities, that people who wish to and are capable of work may not be able to as a result of circumstances beyond their control. The concept of 'institutional' services encompasses the notion that as a right all the citizens of a nation state should be provided with essential minimum services regardless of whether they are considered worthy or not.

I am suggesting that even residual services that initially were provided for lunatics, convicts and the destitute were not applicable to Aborigines prior to 1957. At least these categories of persons were in the society and might return to it. Aborigines were outside it, were in fact complete aliens. Prior to 1957 they were not seen as people, much less citizens. They were perceived of as below the level of the most alienated European. This period from 1835 - 1957 might in these terms be seen as 'pre-residual'. In Victoria in 1957 the legislation was altered to indicate that Aborigines were now to be seen as entitled to the status of recipients of 'residual' services. In 1967 the legislation allowed the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to operationalize the concept that Aborigines were entitled to 'institutional' services. However, even this notion seems to fail to carry development far enough. To extend the notion of services beyond those provided as a right a further development is required, and a concept proposed by Tierney\(^7\) suggests that this development is a move toward some form of group consciousness that might be called a 'Social Development' phase. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs did not reach this point during the period of the study.

THE MAJOR CONCEPTUAL AREA — SYSTEMS

When focussing on systems in social science, and especially in the field of social change, it is prudent to begin by taking the wider and more general view. This means that considering the social environment as a dynamic even turbulent social field, provides the first key to appropriate social systems thinking. In stable environments various types of goal seeking mechanisms of a quite fixed and concrete type can operate successfully. In turbulent environments, however, where change and the rates of change are exponential, concrete-type mechanisms and fixed or rigid operations or rules are non-functional; whereas in such an environment 'ideal' seeking systems provide a means of operating without excessive conflict or failure being built in.\(^8\)
Although the perspectives of the world's people vary in space and in time, every human concern falls somewhere on the space-time graph. The majority of the world's people are concerned with matters that affect only family or friends over a short period of time. Others look farther ahead in time or over a larger area — a city or a nation. Only a very few people have a global perspective that extends far into the future.⁹
I believe it necessary to state one more time that the study considers only urban situations and that no traditional culture persists in Victoria. Because of the nature of social welfare, planning must usually be undertaken in areas of uncertainty. The systems approach is valuable in that it provides an implicit potential order or "mind-hold" for the worker, no matter how turbulent, random and disordered things may be or may appear to be. The systems approach offers a frame of reference for ordering knowledge as it is obtained. It provides a general model for establishing interventive processes in social welfare.

The Time-Space Continuum
One particular development arising from the systems area is so simple, yet so significant, that it requires special note for the important role it plays in considering the data. A person's time and space perspective depend upon his culture, past experience, education and the immediacy of the problems confronting him on each level of his functioning. Most people successfully solve their problems in a smaller area before they move their concerns to a larger one. In general, the larger the space and the longer the time associated with a particular problem, the smaller the number of people who will actually be concerned with its solution. There can be difficulties in limiting one's view to an area that is too small, which has often happened in voluntary organizations dealing with Aboriginal affairs. There are also many examples as Meadows points out, where a person striving with all his might to solve some immediate local problem finds his efforts defeated by events occurring in a larger context: Local officials' plans overturned, for example, by national policy.

In this area of planning, it is clear that too limited a view of the systems in which events are occurring can be disastrous. In race relations and in other social welfare planning this is of critical concern when planning is being done in the sphere of an ideal-seeking system where there is exponential change and excessive turbulence. In such situations few people will plan for the larger system and the long term because few people will have the perspective. If, then, planning is to be long-term and broad-spectrum or broad-aim, then its application will need to be via short-term close-focus projects, as will be suggested. The reason is that it is in the short term and the close-focus that the attention of most of the interventive agents and their clients will be located. These issues are as closely related to the role of the interventive agent in Aboriginal affairs as they are to interventive agents in other situations.

The Aborigines Welfare Board was established in an atmosphere of crisis and the minutes of the early meetings reflect the Board's sense of urgency. It was expected to act and quickly and immediately to deal with some of the criticism related to the living conditions of the Aborigines:

Its perspective was the immediate present and its attention was focussed on specific localities. Where it could buy land houses were built. No picture of the total Victorian situation was available, no concept of the effect of present actions on the future could be expected, no long-term systems perspective could play a role under these conditions.
Just prior to 1958 the Apex Clubs of Australia had undertaken a National Service Scheme and had recommended, in the light of their data, that clubs sponsor individual families, or even a couple of families, and provide them with employment and encouragement for educating their children, as well as ensuring that they had help in budgeting and other social, economic and personal assistance. These experiments were undertaken with goodwill and enthusiasm and sincerity. They were disastrous. Several of the families in Victoria were rent asunder by the experience. It was a lack of planning knowledge and perspective that could be avoided today. Without adequate awareness of the total systemic linkage through which the family functioned, the planning was inadequate for the situation. In any locality the extent of the situation that could be encompassed was too small, in terms of an optimal time-space area.

In 1968 the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs found itself in possession of more adequate data and charged with wide enough responsibilities to avoid the limited perspectives that had had such disastrous results previously. Seeing its task as encompassing the total community, including Aborigines, it also perceived that housing was not the central issue. So when it did begin to plan for the housing segment of its programme it provided not only for all categories of accommodation, from rental to purchase, but also for every area throughout the state. It was systems-oriented, seeing the whole situation and being aware of the importance of the inter-relation and inter-dependence of the parts.

**Systems, Social Science and Social Work**

The systems model is based on the assumption that matter in all of its forms, living and non-living, can be regarded as systems and that systems, as systems, have certain discrete properties that can be studied. In social science the systems are individuals, small groups or complex human organizations. Some of the common properties will be examined briefly in what follows.

A point which bears heavily on the situation relates to the quite remarkable extent that a helping system stands between the client (for whom one would like to presume it was designed) and the society (in whose general interests one likes to presume it was established), blocking effective action and resolution of the situation of concern! Polsky\(^1\) makes a point to which we shall return: that clients need to be maximally involved in overhauling the system that was created to help them, but which excluded them because of their impairment.

In the case of Aborigines, until 1957 it was generally seen as clearly irrelevant to consult them except when failure to do so would clearly frustrate the aims of the authorities. After 1957, and at least until 1967, they were mostly excluded because they were perceived as being the recipients or consumers of services provided for them; viz. residual services, and their role was thus as passive recipient and dependent. After 1967 the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs perceived Aboriginal affairs as a problem for Aboriginal and European communities alike and this shift to a wider concern encompassed a necessarily longer time span. The expanded focus brought into view the relevance of the two systems or sub-systems and the significance of the boundary issues between them.
Another way of viewing the Aborigines Welfare Board orientation is to suggest that Aborigines were seen as requiring socializing in the ways of the European community. Aborigines were constantly evidencing their inability to cope with the more complex way of life of the Europeans. The message of the early part of the period was that certain arrangements had to be made for their own good. They were the recipients of a residual service which had to be provided because their behaviour was unacceptable to the rest of the community.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs operated from a different perspective, it saw the behaviour of the Aboriginal community as dysfunctional not because of the inadequacy of the people but because of the pressures of the society on them. The result of this shift is a transformation of the value and informational base, the effect of which is to suggest that the difficulties which exist may be due not to the individual but to the community as a whole, i.e. the system. When this change occurred an ‘institutional’ perception becomes feasible and intervention can be focussed on resolution of boundary issues between the systems or sub-systems in conflict or in disharmony.

The analytic model of a system demands that we treat phenomena and the concepts for organizing the phenomena as if there existed —

a) organization of the parts
b) interaction between the parts
c) interdependence of the parts
d) integration of the parts or elements.

Systems analysis assumes structure and stability in a frozen cross-sectional slice of time. Now let us examine the major elements of a system.

**Major Elements of a System**

**Boundaries:**

Chin\(^1\) defines boundary as the line forming a closed circle around selected variables where there is less interchange of energy (or communication) across the line of the circle than within.

The Aborigines Welfare Board and its predecessors acted in a manner which suggests that it did not grasp the notion that Aborigines and non-Aborigines constituted self-contained systems or sub-systems in interaction. So they did not focus on nor distinguish any boundary issues. To the Agency Aborigines were simply a collection of individuals, located ‘out there’; elusive, unpredictable, difficult or impossible to control and constantly creating crises for the Board who had legislative responsibility for these crises and political pressure to dispose of them.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs recognized that the Aboriginal community and the non-Aboriginal community were separate sub-systems in limited interaction. As a result of this perception, policy and planning concerns were focussed on the interface or boundary which separated those sub-systems (the two communities). The most elusive aspects of that boundary relate to the flow of information and attitudes. The focus of interventive programmes is boundary permeability. The task, to establish
to establish limits and bridges so that Aborigines can move from one sub-system to the other and non-Aborigines, the same.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs saw knowledge and understanding as critical boundary blocking elements. Both sub-systems required modification. The concept which most closely characterises a programme of this kind which aims primarily at a normative goal, that is the establishment of two sub-system distributions whose characteristics differ in the critical areas to an insignificant extent, is perhaps the notion of ‘regression toward the mean’ (given that this usage somewhat misrepresents that concept). Different understandings, different levels of functioning, different explanations for phenomena had to be dealt with if the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs’ objectives were to be achieved, that is, if the normative function of attaining a matching distribution on ‘critical’ characteristics was to be achieved. The Ministry’s interventive strategy was built around at least one ideal of sufficient abstraction and which was sufficiently pervasive and acceptable to encompass both sub-systems. The ideal which it sought was ‘equality’ and its aim was to link all policy across the two sub-systems ideologically, and the slogan “Aborigines are people” reflected that systemically acceptable ideology.

Because of this system focus boundaries and boundary issues were central to Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs policy and planning. In each and every major area where Aborigines were functioning differently and ineffectively in relation to the ‘norm’ (with all the definitional problems this contains) relevant programmes had to be developed to assist Aborigines to close the gap. And in many of these areas where the meshing of the distributions was also a function of the European community, programmes had to be developed which influenced their understanding of and attitudes toward the situation. Of course, on many occasions the major focus of activity was not on the Aboriginal community at all. Thus, on one memorable occasion when a group of children were sent home from school because they had nits in their hair, while educative programmes were being run to encourage the Aboriginal parents to locate the necessary medicines and to deal with the problem entirely themselves without any action by Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs or Health Department nurses, an incredible amount of energy had to be devoted to the European community and to some of the community institutions to allow the learning process to proceed to a point where the parents could, would and did finally resolve the situation themselves, fully accepting the usual parental responsibilities. Simply insisting that the European community apply the usually accepted and appropriate sanctions to parents who did not comply to minimal health, legal and educational requirements, certainly absorbed more Ministry effort than did the Aboriginal health education aspect of the problem.

Tension, Stress, Strain and Conflict:
There appears to have been a general increase amongst those who have been concerned with social welfare about the existence and the use of conflict. It is as though the negative connotations of the notion of conflict blinded welfare workers to its potentially constructive and creative potentialities in human affairs. There is a considerable necessary amount of tension and turbulence in every human system and with it goes uncertainty and unpredictability; it is not an aspect of human nature with which we have yet come to terms. So in Aboriginal affairs throughout most of its history the elements of tension,
conflict and stress tend to have been denied or, at least, kept out of sight. In fact, to the Aborigines Welfare Board and to many social welfare administrators and practitioners the reduction of tension and conflict became an end in itself. The possibilities of using tension, conflict and stress, of perhaps increasing it as a creative and innovative means of resolving social problems and facilitating social change, were overlooked. Tension and conflict are 'in' any system; in fact no living system can survive without them. For practitioners of social change, identification and analysis of the operation of tension and conflict in the systems with which they are working is of major importance.

To tie these concepts into the field of Aboriginal affairs, a brief examination of an aspect of the housing programme of the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs will demonstrate the difference inherent in the two approaches; one using the systems approach and one which did not. The Aborigines Welfare Board was, from its inception, under considerable pressure to do something about ‘The Aboriginal Housing Problem’. The physical conditions under which a majority of Aborigines lived were visibly poor and, as physical conditions are very high on the visibility profile in social welfare, they demanded and received high priority in the action programme. However, there are many aspects to housing, and solving or attempting to solve one aspect immediately altered the situation in another area of the same factor. Take, for example, rent: if the Aborigines Welfare Board was to charge rent then it seemed logical to expect people to pay. If people did not pay then what action was appropriate? The ultimate sanction was eviction. However, if they were evicted and went back to the river bank the Aborigines Welfare Board was likely to be accused of creating the very problems that it was supposed to be solving, i.e. the housing problem. As the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs found, there were some routes out of this dilemma, and they can be viewed in terms of the interacting factors in systems. The Aborigines Welfare Board was not able during its ten years to see its way through this dilemma. It dealt with the problem by charging a very nominal rent that neither the Aborigines nor non-Aborigines could claim was too great, viz. $1.00 or $2.00 per week, with a maximum of $4.00. But even this action did not stop the problem from arising, and thus tension was created. Tension being abhorred either between Aborigines or between Aborigines and the Board or the community, action to reduce it was seen as necessary. The Aborigines Welfare Board was lacking, at this time, an awareness of the complex systemic nature of its operation, it was also lacking awareness of the effect on a complex system of adjusting one factor to solve a problem, viz. each adjustment creates other problems that must then be dealt with. The Aborigines Welfare Board lacked a unifying concept, i.e. it was not operating as an ideal seeking system. In highly turbulent environments in which it was certainly operating a concept of this kind, in whatever terms, is clearly useful. Thus when there was pressure to reduce the tensions arising from non-payment of rent, this led to threats but to no further action. The problem, then, was that when the threat and the problem were ignored by the Aborigines Welfare Board, as was in the interest of minimal crises.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs perceived the stress as positive. In housing it observed what were the system-wide destructive effects of not requiring Aborigines to pay rent, seeing this as reinforcing the image held by the non-Aboriginal community, and now accepted by a virtual majority of the members of the Aboriginal community in Victoria,
the expectation was becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Aborigines were assuming that they were not capable of meeting the same standards of responsibility as other members of the community.

The effect of Aborigines Welfare Board policy was significant. It led to a severing of the connection between the Aboriginal people and the sub-standard humpy camps. Over the decade a generation grew up with no knowledge and experience of that way of life. The Director of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs chose intentionally to increase the tension and stress by demanding equal rent, which meant that a boundary which existed between the two community systems — rent responsibility — was to be adjusted differentially so that the requirements of members of both communities should be the same and thus the conditions which maintained the boundary between the two systems in this area was to be eliminated. This action was possible because of the focus of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs accepting the existence of conflict and being willing to use it to reduce inequality or in system terms boundary non-permeability.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs policy was based on a belief in the ideal of equality. This ideal was acceptable to both Aborigines and non-Aborigines alike. Thus the intervention process could maintain a situation which created tension acceptable to both communities and could defend this action in a manner acceptable to both, even though the specific practice, that of requiring Aborigines to pay increased rents was far from a popular one.

Also, the Ministry was not so naive as to believe that tensions could be created without provision of programme mechanisms to provide suitable outlets for its expression. The tension was created by a set of structural arrangements: rent scales, notices, etc., and this was supported by a functional programme activity based on the relationship established between the affected tenants and the Ministry field staff. The tension and the tension-reduction mechanisms allowed for the development of new insight and understanding and it was anticipated that as a result a new equilibrium would be established — and it was.

Equilibrium or Steady State:
‘Discord is but harmony misunderstood, and vice versa.’

A system is assumed to have a tendency to achieve a balance among the various forces operating within it and on it. Equilibrium refers to the balance when it relates to a fixed point or level and time. Steady State refers to the balanced relationship of parts not dependent on any fixed point or level. The general point here is that a system in equilibrium resists the influence of disturbance. A system is always in some sort of static or dynamic equilibrium.

The significant questions for the welfare planner are:
What internal or external conditions lead to equilibrium?
What parts of the system represent the greatest readiness to change, i.e. separate those
forces attempting to restore an old equilibrium from those attempting to establish a new equilibrium.

If Aboriginal housing at every level is considered, the forces working to maintain the old state are visible and those pressing for the establishment of a new equilibrium can also be perceived.

Begin with the river bank humpy camps. Social pressures within the Aboriginal community maintain the integrity of the group, while their relationships outside the group are stereotyped and apersonal. The system is almost closed in some major respects. A government officer attempting to influence this community is quickly responded to by depersonalization; for example, ‘You are from the Board, you can only do (or say) what you’re told to do (or say)’, or ‘You are a ‘Gub’ (white man), you can’t understand’. Each attempt at communication is met by some form of stereotyping. On some occasions the officer will be met by silence or even a refusal to acknowledge that he is there. If the government officer persists several outcomes are possible. He may succeed in establishing genuine personal relationships with some of the people.

He is then in a position to offer suggestions and aid which will improve the quality of life, e.g. rehousing possibilities. To such offers the system responds ambivalently. In the past, and especially with the Aborigines Welfare Board, it was common for opportunity to be offered to some members of the community and not to others (as also shown in the Apex programme referred to previously) and to some communities and not others. Under these circumstances the internal pressure within the system (the informal social sanctions) operated to maintain the old equilibrium. The situation can be handled by creating opportunities for a wider range of people with accommodation difficulties and by making the opportunities available to all the Aboriginal communities in the State. This has the effect of allowing those who wish to improve their circumstances to do so without necessarily doing it at the expense of other members of the community; they can point to the availability of opportunity for those who may not wish to take the risk of change. This situation creates a new dynamic equilibrium even after the move of some individuals to the new physical environment.

Aborigines Welfare Board rehousing projects were sabotaged and undermined by the effects of the move which isolated the family from its (system) supports. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs offered a broad spectrum approach which did take account of the major categories of people who wished to be more adequately housed. People were thus able to move if they wished even though there was pressure from some areas inside the system to discourage them. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs offered help for families to acquire cheap rental accommodation of a variety of types that covered all but the single indigent individual and added the possibility of home purchase, while taking major steps to discourage and prevent the continuation of life in sub-standard dwellings. The possibilities for change then existed for nearly all and it was possible for a new equilibrium to be established that did not implicitly threaten the new existence of the family.
Feedback:
Every system, except the hypothetically smallest, is an environment for other systems
and every system, except the hypothetically largest, has an environment and these
necessarily interact. Every system has inputs from outside, from the environment and
from other systems, throughputs and outputs.

The inputs collect and gather information on how the system is doing and as the
system monitors the effect of its output it modifies its behaviour. Thus input from the
environment as a result of output steers and guides the operation and is known as
‘feedback’.

System concepts allow for two types of feedback loops: positive ones which feed back
into the system and support the development of its operation, and negative feedback
loops which are commonly referred to as vicious circles. In these latter type the cause
and effect relationship closes in on itself; such as in the poverty cycle where low income
and poor circumstances continue to turn in on each other perpetuating the conditions
of poverty, often generation after generation. The significant questions for the social
welfare planner are:
What are the particular system’s feedback procedures?
How adequate are they?
What blocks their effective use?
Is it lack of skill in gathering, coding or using the data?

If the Aborigines Welfare Board is seen as a helping system, we can examine one aspect
of its housing programme. A family is failing to cope with its new home. The Aborigines
Welfare Board, because of its staffing and communication logistics, may have failed to
receive the input, i.e. knowledge that something was wrong, in time to act; or if it
received the data which would suggest the impending breakdown it may have failed to
realize that the information being received was warning of an impending breakdown,
(a not infrequent occurrence) in systems terms failed to code or interpret the incoming
data correctly; or if received and correctly coded (interpreted) failure still frequently
occurred as a result of inappropriate action taken in response to the incoming data.
In systems terms failure to act appropriately appears frequently to have been because
too little of the total system was involved in the problem under consideration:
in terms of the time/space continuum, too short a time was being considered and too
limited a range of persons involved.

The Aborigines Welfare Board perceived failure against the background of a residual
service; no concept such as that of a sub-culture (system) under excessive stress was
present, the inability to maintain a steady state or equilibrium was perceived in semi-
isolation. Instead of feeding back to the client system reassurance, it fed back re-
inforcement of inadequacy, i.e. demonstrated inability to cope, an acceptance of the
family’s inequality.
In similar circumstances the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, having perceived the problem
in its wider (systemic) content, marshalled resources of staff and finance and initiated
activity wide enough to cope with substantially more of the total reality and to perceive
more of the total reality of the situation. It acted to maintain the equilibrium of the
system by supporting from outside in a manner congruent with the shared ideal of
equality but maintaining the requirement for the family to change to cope with its
responsibility. For example, it established the desirability of ideal accommodation for
all and made this feasible whilst still insisting on the requirement for responsibility
i.e. a proper aspect of equality is equal responsibility so the two apparently conflicting
elements became congruent parts of the whole housing situation. Thus a family under
stress providing clear signals, e.g. rent not being paid (a circumstance the Aborigines
Welfare Board could not pick up because of its records and lack of perception of the
systemic reality of this indicator), sent a social worker or other officer to intervene,
locate the area of stress, and provide a basis of support consistent with the system
ideal of equality. The feedback that the Aboriginal family received from failure was
seen as significant by the Ministry because of its wider (system) focus; this allowed
the Ministry to plan with this factor in mind.

Open and Closed Systems:
All living systems are open; that is they have contact with the environment, with input
and output across boundaries. There are times when we might choose for the purpose
of study to assume a system is closed and we may then deliberately open the system
to see what happens. In fact when this is done, it is assumed that the system is
temporarily closed and action is taken as though it was the hypothetically largest
system, and thus the environment within which other sub-systems are functioning.
Because of the nature of social welfare issues it is sometimes desirable to view an
aspect of a total problem as if it were a closed system in order to understand it better.
Here, one assumes that the data needed for intervention rests in the psychological or
sociological characteristics inside the unit and not in the environment. In Aboriginal
affairs programmes, because of the close and intense nature of the kinship networks,
there have from time to time been occasions when this procedure has assisted in the
planning of change processes, e.g. in planning change programmes on a settlement
the intervention agent may concentrate solely on the relationships on the settlement
to determine the patterns of influence, even though people on the settlement may
have extensive ties outside. The systems approach is therefore useful in:
— Observing
— Analysing
— Diagnosing
— and planning intervention.
This concept is tied in to the idea that planning for intervention must be undertaken
in such a way that the personnel involved are dealing with system areas of sufficient
size that they have some concept of perspective, i.e. the area must be a large enough
piece of ground to be able to ‘get their mind around’. The size of the system that
different people will be able to grasp and cope with will vary and this is perhaps
another way of expressing the type of concept involved in the differential time-space
continuum of different people. It is very clear that in terms of this concept the
Aborigines Welfare Board was able to grasp too little of the system and to act in
regard to this too limited aspect. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs it will be suggested, had access to wider data and resources; support in such a way as to permit it to grasp wider aspects of the system and to intervene meaningfully on a wider front.

Again associated with these concepts is the issue of where various people involved in the intervention process fit in the system; here the elements are those relating to the interventive personnel, i.e. who sends them into the field — their auspices; what they are instructed to do — their mandate; and what right they have to be there — their legitimacy.

Models
A final note in the area of theoretical considerations relates to models. A model is simply an ordered set of assumptions about a complex system. It is an attempt to understand some aspect of the infinitely varied world by selecting from perceptions and past experience a set of general observations applicable to the problem at hand. Models are frequently misused; in this context it is intended to make some use of a model of the world as a system developed by Meadows at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His model showed that in any complex system if any action was taken to deal with one variable the outcome was a readjustment of the whole system such that new difficulties or problems of some other type arose. His analytic model can be used as an analogue of most types of complex social systems. The analytic prefix merely indicates that this is a constructed simplification or reality that retains only those features regarded as essential for relating similar processes when and wherever they occur. They help to inform what factors are being taken into account and what relationships amongst them are assumed and therefore to know the basis of conclusions. A concrete model is thus based on an analytic one but uses more of the content of actual cases. It is still a simplification, designed to reveal the essential features of some range of cases.

In the model from which some of the discussions that follow will be based, i.e. the Meadows model, the fact that new situations are created as a result of solutions to old ones means that whenever the system is made aware of a new piece of information it is able to establish some new ‘filter’ whose function will be to reduce the outcome of some previously unpredicted operation or occurrence.
End Notes — Chapter 2

CHAPTER 3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES
AND POLICIES IN ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS 1834 - 1957

INTRODUCTION

In order to put the era under study further into perspective some order is brought into the period 1834 to 1957. This fulfils one of the lesser objectives of the study and is used to still further help the reader understand the nature of the issues which have confronted governments in their efforts to cope with the 'Aboriginal Problem'.

Planning for social intervention is still in its infancy. Until more is understood about the most useful parameters for understanding this process it must be assumed that what can be understood about past activities are both relevant and significant to the understanding of present difficulties. This notion is consistent with the systems framework used by the author, as it lays out some aspects of the time/space continuum and especially adds the dimension of time, as a meaningful aspect of the present system being considered.

Insofar as past history of a system has resulted in the present system, this is clearly relevant. Insofar as past programmes of intervention have achieved various outcomes under differing sets of circumstances, something should be learned, if only through trial and error, about future interventions. It is thus my contention that any responsible professional change agent needs to be aware of what activities have preceded him, he need not start, as it were, from scratch.

It is a well tried piece of practice wisdom that informs the social worker that knowledge of his clients historical past frequently can be used to enhance the establishment of a sound working relationship, sometimes to provide access to an otherwise inaccessible relationship, at other times to speed up the helping process or perhaps only make the helping relationship more pleasant.

No intervention programme develops in a vacuum. Thus, the situation that existed in 1958 was a result of the efforts of the British and Colonial Governments to contend with the presence of the native inhabitants of the new colony.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, the examination of Broad-Aim programmes requires that the programmes of the present be placed in their perspective. They develop cumulatively and as I will show they highlight issues.

There appear to be two main phases into which intervention falls in the period 1834-1957 and the details of these are to be found in available primary and secondary sources. As I am not an historian, this is not a history but a selective account of some of the more significant programmes. Phase one deals with the activities planned prior to the establishment of Victoria as a separate territory. Phase two begins with the Select Committee of Enquiry of 1858 established by the New South Wales Legislative Council which culminated in the first piece of Victorian legislation in 1860. It ends in 1957 when the notion of protection finally disappears from official
SCHEMATIC OF INTERVENTIVE SEQUENCE FROM VALUES TO PROGRAMMES

FIGURE 2

At any moment in time there exist a multitude of differing

A
VALUES
VALUES
VALUES

overtly or covertly these may be stated as

B
PRINCIPLES
PRINCIPLES
PRINCIPLES

In conflict one with another

As a result for those who must plan and act there exist

C
DILEMMAS
How to act in the face of these conflicts

This problem is resolved by some type of

D
COMPROMISE
Meet those principles closest to the hearts of the decision-makers, not always expediency

From the compromise there can emerge action in the form of

E
PROGRAMMES – SOCIAL EXPERIMENTS
evolved from the compromises meeting some selective needs and not others

Evaluation is usually focussed at Point E and thus may fail to take account of the complexities at the planning interface.
thought and action to be replaced, as will be shown in the following Chapter, by a notion of Welfare 1.

FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERING INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

An examination of the history of intervention programmes and experiments in Aboriginal affairs may be perceived as a study of compromises. The compromises are the action resolutions of dilemmas which arise because of a conflict between different principles based on diverse values. In some instances the value dispute results from the position taken by different groups with their different interests, in others within one otherwise cohesive group there exist different value positions.

The values and the principles are rather difficult to locate and isolate in older records. A wider knowledge of the history of the periods is needed and this the author does not possess. So, this Chapter will examine primarily the programmes/social experiments after first suggesting the dilemmas that appear to be present during the period. Some aspects of these will be taken up in later chapters. The data presented will thus be a selective study of a number of interventive programmes which illustrate the nature of the compromises made as a result of the dilemmas that existed. It will then be suggested that programmes changed as did legislation and administration, as a reflection of the changing nature of the dilemmas. Some dilemmas were resolved during a period of time; for example the conflict between programmes for full-bloods with traditional culture and part-Aborigines was resolved by 1957 by the disappearance of both full-bloods and traditional culture. Some dilemmas vanished because of the addition and deletion of values which modified the important principles on which the dilemmas were based.

Dilemmas

1) Supported by a great deal of unlikely-to-be-disputed evidence I have chosen to presuppose that a significant and fundamental dilemma for British society was its inability to cope with dissimilar cultural forms. From the history of Aboriginal affairs such a belief is easily sustained. The dilemma in practical terms becomes how to act toward culturally dissimilar groups over whom one is in a position of superior authority. However, insofar as it is a characteristic possessed by British culture, in this sense it is reasonable to consider the British as significantly ethnocentric.

I will suggest that this characteristic of British culture and character above almost all others makes the actions of those involved with Aboriginal affairs most meaningful. This is not to suggest that there may not be other frameworks equally potent for accounting for the behaviour observed; however, this one is particularly helpful in accounting for much of what follows.

Following on this assumption there would appear to be at least six possible ways of handling a situation in which the British had responsibility for a culturally dissimilar group whose numbers were small enough and whose technological development slight enough to offer no serious threat to British superiority:
(a) Isolate them from Europeans and protect them from European influence and exploitation (while they die out or...) anyhow, keep them separate and out of sight if possible.

(b) Destroy them: shoot, poison, decimate by disease, help them to kill each other off. A more permanent form of separation and isolation.

(c) Miscegenate: a form of isolation that takes time, but ultimately is effective in removing them.

(d) Assimilate them: make them sufficiently like us and part of our culture so that their differences, i.e., their dissimilarities, are inconsequential.

(e) Accept their dissimilarity from us and relegate it to a status less than human. This seems to be the most favoured way British society has used to cope with the continuing presence of dissimilarity.

(f) Cultural Pluralism: an alternative which accepts dissimilarity for what it is, a sign of difference, and places no negative stigma on it.

Associated with this issue are a number of questions: what will be the rights of the Aborigines to maintain their traditional culture, the extent to which it is necessary for it to change? To which aspects of European culture should Aborigines be given access and to which encouraged to participate?

Work — employment
Medical care, hospitals, doctors, etc.
Religion, churches
Clothes, dress
Material possessions, and if so, which
Transport services
Land ownership
Social activities
Sporting activities
Use of and access to alcohol
Political institutions, voting, parliament, etc.
Social welfare provisions
Marriage
Housing, dwellings, accommodation —
To what extent, with what limitations?

What methods of intervention should be considered appropriate for implementing changes?
Coercion Education
Isolation Extermination
Separation of the generations Modelling
Protection Actual experience of a better way
Inducements Persuasion?
Reason

How could the policy-makers act in a humanitarian manner, yet expend the minimum of resources?
How could Aborigines be protected from wilful destruction by Europeans frequently for their failure to respect European property laws when they did not appreciate European possessions?

Is it reasonable to suggest that any policy could have been a mistaken policy when one considers the tremendous multitude of objectives stated throughout the literature of Aboriginal affairs?

Similarly, could a statement on the ethnocentric nature of European policy be taken seriously; could, in fact, a policy be non-ethnocentric? In retrospect there is little the British Government of the 1830’s, or the Australian Governments of the 1840’s, could have been expected to do that they did not. The cultural values and political realities determined the range of their actions.

2) The first dilemma raises the second; what was the status of Aborigines?
   Were they human like us, children of God too?
   Were they human, but not like us, but like children or the mentally defective?
   Were they slightly less than human, like the missing link between man and the apes that Charles Darwin was to suggest, a slightly earlier development in the process of evolution?
   Were they even less than this, not really human at all, more some other form of animal life?

The dilemma to the policymakers was that one of the various statements all of which were unacceptable had to be selected as a basis for policy.

It is reasonably self-evident that one’s answer to this dilemma would considerably influence the likely characteristics of any interventive programme and its objectives.

3) The next dilemma is not at all unique to the involvement in Aboriginal affairs, but it is nevertheless a significant one in this, as in any social welfare area. How should the policymakers respond in the face of pressure from the differing interests of different groups in the society holding divergent philosophical positions in regard to still other value categories in addition to the two previous areas?

The various groups would include at least:
   Politicians, first in Britain, then later in the States of Australia
   Aborigines Protection Society
   Missionaries and other Churchmen
   Settlers
   Governors in the Colonies
   Protectors appointed to act
   Aborigines themselves.

Here the dilemma was that the policymakers had to respond to the pressure groups but which ever alternative they selected was certain to alienate one of the other groups.
4) The next dilemma is that of the relationship of Aborigines who neither speak English nor communicate to any extent with the Europeans, in regard to British Law; which aspects should apply and which ones should not? Who should decide, and on what grounds? Associated with this dilemma was the tendentious issue of the law and the land, never resolved to anyone's satisfaction. How could the settlers' desire for land have been reconciled with Aboriginal traditional concepts of land, and how, as time passed and the effects of the initial situation were transferred through the generations 1835-1972, could there be expected any satisfactory resolution in law?

Here the dilemma was essentially between two positions of law and whichever was chosen by the policymakers was bound to be unacceptable to one of the two groups. The outcome either incensed Europeans or outraged Aborigines.

If, in the process of studying the early programmes developed to deal with the existence of Aborigines in Victoria, we look at these dilemmas, it should, in most instances, be possible to perceive the compromises that were made. The actions and dilemmas of the past must be faced squarely and policy needs to be seen as a series of adjustment to the changing circumstances. It may, for example, be suggested that Europeans came to Australia, occupied the land and after that it was simply a matter of establishing what was the best deal the Aborigines could get. A study of the development of major interventive programmes can make no pretence of answering all or any of these dilemmas adequately. It merely suggests that there were many objectives and values that were involved and that Aborigines were not continuously apathetic and alienated, as was believed to be the case in the 1950's. There were major difficulties in mounting effective programmes, not the least of which was the complete inability of the decision-makers to agree on a definition of what an effective programme would be. This difficulty was not resolved until 1968, and even then not to anyone's complete satisfaction.

There seems to be little value in inspecting programmes with the intent to condemn the actors. The actions, the outcomes and the consequences should help to guide future decisions. What interventive actions were planned and implemented vis-a-vis Aborigines are important here and a selective portion of the programmes associated with these has been inspected and reported for the light they throw on the policies and practices of the immediate past and the present. It seems to me that each intervention programme taught us something about the resolution of dilemmas, but that the succeeding administration was unable to accommodate the new learning. It is to this point that the Social Work Researcher must direct some attention and to which we will return at the end of this chapter. It is significant that Aborigines have been written up as the victims of policy, presented as the people to whom things were done. Today they are beginning to emerge as active agents in their own change.

EARLY DESTRUCTION OF ABORIGINAL SOCIETY

Aborigines never held the balance of power, made no wars and so held no treaties; they had nothing the early Victorian settlers required except land, and that was easily taken. The consequence was the destruction of the local sources of food, the increased movement of Aboriginal groups, the conflict with settlers over food, and when Aborigines could not
be ‘civilized’, settlers were able to justify their slaughter — Aborigines were a menace to personal safety and property, which rights they clearly did not respect! Aborigines learned to mistrust government as unpredictable and inconsistent and during the first half of the 19th century and later there seemed to have been many settlers, missionaries and others who doubted that the blacks were really human to the same extent as themselves. Barwick quotes Turner for one early and succinct expression of this attitude: The substitution of more than a million of industrious and peaceful people for a roaming and fighting contingent of six thousand cannot be said to be dearly purchased, even at the cost of the violent deaths of a fraction of the most aggressive among them.

The colonist and missionary tried to improve the conditions of the Aborigines. They failed to respond and it was suggested that this was because of their incompatibility with civilization and not due to neglect. In fact, they failed to improve their condition because neither the government nor the settlers really desired that they should.

The experiments in the first fifteen years after Victoria's settlement represent the most intensive attempt made in the 19th century in any part of Australia to civilize the Aborigines. At this time humanitarians everywhere were becoming appalled at the effect European civilization was having on native populations in the Empire and the virgin territory at Port Phillip seemed ideal for establishing humanitarian experiments. The weight of available evidence suggests that traditional Aboriginal culture and the Aboriginal people were in no sense developmentally or culturally primitive, nor uncivilized. They demonstrated an exceptionally intelligent adaptation to a most constraining and inhospitable natural environment. They developed a sophisticated non-material and non-technological culture which has been decimated in Victoria by the technologically and numerically superior British invaders in their attempts to impose their order on the new land in which, ultimately, their numbers and destructive powers were bound to be conclusive in establishing their pre-eminence and in imposing their will. There is no assumption intended, nor implied, that either culture is better or more virtuous, but to balance a little the weight of stereotyping of the Aborigine as somehow a figure of ridicule, inadequacy or inferiority. Foxcroft, as a contrast, says:

There is about the culture of the Australians a quality that has attracted and charmed many people. Its combination of maturity and primitiveness and the dignity and the emotional satisfaction that it appears to give to participants in it, have fascinated and moved investigators.

The impact of the European culture was to some extent predictable, that is, looking at the situation from the mid-twentieth century. The tremendous difficulties which were to face the Aborigines in adjusting and coming to terms with the alien invaders and a totally different kind of life could not be made quickly and it was bound to prove too much for the culture to cope with. Foxcroft perceived that: 'If the will to live left the race, the result inevitably would be its disappearance', and he concluded 'it is clear, however, that the natives of Australia had the slenderest prospects of survival.'
The inevitability of disaster for Aboriginal society was not seen or expressed clearly until late in the 19th century/early in the 20th century, and by then it was too late for the majority of Victorian Aborigines.

It is significant that Foxcraft says that he set out to show, by examining what he calls representative experiments, that it was not ill treatment that led to the degeneration and decline of the Aborigines and, in some places, their extinction. It was, he believed, mistaken policies (by which he meant mistaken if they actually were supposed to save Aboriginal culture) of civilization, in an environment predisposed to indifference and sometimes hostility.

He points out that, more often than not, it was men with goodwill, of sound intentions, who worked in Aboriginal affairs in the early days of settlement. He also points out that they retired from the struggle more often than not defeated (by those with whose interests they were at odds) after failing to stop the drift. He says:

In the nineteenth century indeed an effective native policy in Australia was really impossible, men had not the knowledge of native custom that modern anthropology has given us, nor was the atmosphere of an expanding colonial society favourable to such schemes which demanded heavy expenditure and large reservations of land.

The outcome of intervention programmes was the destruction of Aboriginal society, therefore consciously or unconsciously this is probably what was intended.

TWO PHILOSOPHIES UNDERPINNING THE EARLY INTERVENTIONS

The actions of the 1840's to 1860 were supposed to have been based, as were later developments, on the belief that the natives should and would become normal (westernized) civilized beings and achieve the blessings of Christianity. This is the underlying premise for almost all the activity of government and missions till at least 1956. There appeared to be no evidence of intentional cruelty and brutality by government, although frequent such episodes occurred. This statement is made from the perspective of the European and does not appear in the Aboriginal interpretation of European motivation any more than it does in the Negro American literature; clearly this is both a matter for fact and for ethnic perspective and judgment.

The major exponents of the operating philosophy of the time were Mr. Justice Burton of the New South Wales Supreme Court in correspondence to Governor Bourke, 1835, and Captain Grey, an explorer, in a communication to Lord John Russel, 1840. The substance of these two documents is reported in Foxcraft, it is reproduced here to suggest the values which supported the government's programmes:

Burton wrote about the establishment of a mission at Port Phillip. The design, he said, was first to get the natives to settle, then to endeavour to give them a taste for the enjoyments and security of civilized life, and finally to make it necessary that they should work in order to obtain these benefits. The missionary should endeavour to gather the tribes into one. Land should therefore be reserved for black villages, where the natives would be encouraged to leave their wives and children, to prefer entirely a settled life. Burton considered that schools would work an entire change in the children.
He would have them fed and clothed as Europeans, so that the contrast should be as strong as possible between their treatment at school and in the bush, and not only a dislike for the latter, but an incapacity even to live in it would be induced. Huts should be erected at every village for natives, who should be permitted to assist: a beginning might be made by building a hut for the chief. ‘I can imagine’ he wrote, ‘a great effect to be produced by his finding himself the owner of a house in inducing him to settle, and others to settle with him.’

Here is an example of purely hypothetical reasoning, plausible enough, but empirically false. Like many contemporary documents it reflects the writer’s unquestioning conviction of the superiority of the European over the native mode of life. The native in Burton’s opinion had only to see how much better off he would be if he were civilized and he would not miss the chance to live decently.

Captain Grey, who perhaps might have known the natives better, could see their point of view no more clearly than Burton. He proposed a scheme that would have involved an even more thorough detribalization and disturbance of native habits of life. To him the mainspring of the natives’ lives, their tribal custom and cohesion, was a bad thing that should be broken down as soon as possible. He could see in their mode of laws nothing but ‘savage and traditional customs’, obstacles to civilization. Through these customs, ‘so bloodthirsty and opposed to civilization’ the older natives effectively prevented the Europeanization of any tribal member, who would be deterred from adopting the European habits and mode of life by fear of the consequences that the displeasure of the elders would bring. Therefore as long as the tribes were allowed to retain their ‘most barbarous’ laws, so long would they remain in a state of barbarism.

INTERVENTION: PHASE ONE (1835-1860 approx.)

Programmes Commenced between approx. 1834 & 1838 — Batman and Burton (Voluntary Intervention)

Such statements as these are clear expressions of value positions and beliefs stating principles, and had there been no alternate positions put forward perhaps there would have been no dilemmas nor the necessity for compromises which created programmes which could not work.

In 1835 both colonial and British governments supported the establishment of a protectorate of intelligent and competent men. However, pessimism about the future of the Aborigines is pervasive. It seemed inevitable that they would eventually disappear. The possibility of their successful absorption was considered remote and the purpose of policy, vis-a-vis their eventual status, unclear and usually unstated.

The early experiments in intervention during the protectorate and in fact through the less energetic years to 1956, conformed to a pattern. Land was set aside, a person (government protector, guardian, missionary, humanitarian) was located in the area alone or with some limited help, his instructions including following the tribes or coaxing them into a settled place. There he was to civilize and/or christianize and/or encourage them to work and develop middle class European virtues. This he might do
by any means appropriate; the learning model was sometimes seen as imitation and so mere observations of the benefits of civilization would be sufficient for the ignorant savage to change his ways. Sometimes the model was different and there were suggestions of coercion, e.g. separate the men and teach them; or separate the children and educate them.

In Victoria, the patterns of intervention are reflected in the very earliest efforts of Batman and his associate Gellibrand, when they tried to set up the Port Phillip Association with the aid of a rather cunningly contrived and ultimately quite spurious treaty. The significant point is that the deed had two principal aims:
1. Civilizing the native tribes, and
2. Pastoral pursuits,
and 'a Board of 25 persons was to be appointed to deal with native questions, protect the Aborigines, and adjust all disputes'. Its aims were the teaching of civilized habits and manners and religion. Social planning for Aborigines in Victoria got off to an early start. In 1836 at its first public meeting in June the Port Phillip Association for the setting up of a mission, and two of the ten resolutions passed related to Aborigines. Again, social action in relation to Aborigines had got off to an early start in the young colony.

Lonsdale's official instructions from Britain in the mid-1830's (reproduced in both Foxcroft and Barwick) set out the aims of native policy:
— protection from wrong
— conciliation by kind treatment and presents
— establishment of a village and get them to work in return for food and clothing with a view to their improvement,
— restrain them by the gentlest means if they showed signs of insolence or dishonesty.

These instructions appear to be humane. They express a concern to see the Aboriginal people protected, and suggest the development of a lowly class of working beings bound to be somewhat childlike. His supplies for the purpose consisted of
250 blankets
200 check suits
500 red night caps.
The model for development was that proposed by Burton which envisaged the gathering of local tribes and their settlement in villages, taught by missionaries in schools built on each reserve and teaching on the infant system. These villages would be set up in a section of every new town that sprang up. 'Black villages'.

The difficulties of persuading them he saw as easily overcome. They could, he was sure, be persuaded to leave their wives and children, aged and infirm. Time was not to be wasted on the imperfect native languages. For congenial occupation the natives should be encouraged to adopt fishing with lines and boats to be provided. The great object was to wean the blacks by proving experimentally to them the superior advantages of civilized life. This village would progress till, through agriculture and local employment at ordinary wages, the settlement would become self-supporting. It was envisaged that
handouts of food and clothes would initially be required and though the natives were to be warned against returning to the bush or living in idleness, if all the inducements failed they were not to be refused food nor clothing. However, there should be a noticeable difference in quality of the goods given to those living in the village and those others, which was intended to indicate which course the authorities considered better. As the missionary was more likely to be able to educate children than adults an infant school would be established and parents encouraged to leave their children there. Thus runs the description presented by Foxcroft and the source documents and papers of the early instructions. The difficulty here is the gap between the conception and the actual resources and technology.

The really disturbing aspect of this information is that in 1957 and for some of the early years of the Aborigines Welfare Board this same attitude represented the views of responsible and often concerned members of the Board! From which it may be concluded, either, that members were aware of what had happened in the past and were intent on pursuing a similarly disastrous policy. Or, that they believed for some inexplicable reason that the outcome would be different, or that, being unaware of the past experiences, they were responding to a similar belief system.

The first government sponsored mission ran for two years between 1837 and 1839 and, like its counterparts 120 years later, the manager/missionary and the administration clashed over how it should be run, where it should be located, and what resources were needed. The mission began with a 5000 acre reserve in 1837. There were thought to be about 700 Aborigines around Melbourne during that year. When the school opened it was an initial success and 30-40 children attended. Requisitions were put in for a boat, food and clothes and optimism for the future of the mission ran high. There were even plans for more staff.

The policy established for the mission was that children left by their parents were to be washed and clothed and the aim was to reconcile them to fixed hours of labour and schooling. Adults were to have huts allotted and be compelled to work for four hours daily for food and clothing. Occasional visitors were rewarded according to time worked. Perhaps the most startling thing is its incredible similarity to Lake Tyers in 1957.

The school appears to have been successful, i.e. to continue to attract pupils for some months until the novelty wore off. For a year the mission, according to the manager/missionary's report, appeared to be doing well. He reported, however, a fear that the defects in this mission were too severe for him to believe that it would work out. He reported that the natives did little work and the school was frequently empty. He blamed the situation of the mission close to town. In 1839 he reported that the Yarra mission had failed in its primary objective, i.e. the employment of the natives and the education of their children and resigned. The first interventive project had failed and the irony in 1957 was that the Lake Tyers story was rather like an extended version of that first effort in every respect except its closeness to town.
What might be deduced from this first experiment?

It would appear to an outside observer, as it did to the manager/missionary, that there was no incentive for the Aborigines to participate seriously in this alien project. They had access to a great deal of their own land not yet taken over by the settlers; their traditional ways were not totally jeopardized, they were basically not motivated. The Missionary reported on his observations of the failure of a similar mission in Sydney earlier, and Foxcroft reports his belief that the early failure was due to an excessive effort to force the natives too quickly into an artificial mode of life. The missionary/manager rather perceptively thought that if they were removed from their own districts to strange locations where they were dependent on whites for protection the mission idea might work. We never found out, no subsequent activity which tried this process was successful, but then the number of other factors involved in the situation was considerable.

To summarize in a modern social work perspective the government would not consider any concept of contract with the Aborigines, thus intervention was legitimised by the government not the Aborigines. There appears to have been a belief, common during the time, that the ‘accepted’ ways were right (ends) and that any (means) actions taken by legally constituted authority to achieve them were okay. It was generally conceded that once helped or even forced to see the light one would thenceforth follow it. It was a xenophobic age and no purpose was seen in trying to understand primitive man and his ways. Apart from number and disposition, data about Aborigines was by and large for those who wished to observe a ‘curiosity’.

The manager/missionary is reported to have been a man of sincerity candour and ability with, on the whole, sound ideas. He wanted to live among the tribes in the unoccupied areas and prepare them in a gradual way for the inevitable contact with the whites; an idea that community development workers from 1960 onward believed to be an excellent idea and basically sound. In 1964 when the author suggested the idea to the Aborigines Welfare Board he received the reply that even if it was an idea with any merit, which was doubtful, no one had the time or patience in the 1960’s to go through that sort of rigmarole. To the Governor of the time the missionary/manager’s conclusions were both preposterous, inconvenient and expensive. He and Mr. Justice Burton saw no reason why the natives should not be persuaded easily enough to change their life style when they saw the obvious superiority of the European way of life. The mission had, however, demonstrated that preposterous as it seemed, the Aborigines did actually prefer their own ways or could not adapt to the ways of a new culture whilst embedded largely in their own.

Native Policy 1837-1842 (Direct Government Intervention)

This second government experiment was the establishment of a native police corps. White people believed it to be a good idea and Foxcroft comments that this was the one experiment not considered a failure at the time.

The military man who proposed the idea said the advantages would be manifold:
- it would establish the status of the black population
- affection of the natives for whites would be assured
- erratic habits would be rectified
— greater civilization and order would be achieved
— religious forms would be observed
— habits of decency and cleanliness taught
— a strong active attached guard would be assured
— a new and different type of experiment seemed desirable.

The New South Wales Protectorate — Port Phillip District 1838-1850
There were only a few specific programmes during this period, yet it is significant not just because it represents the most intense attempt to civilize the Aborigines made in nineteenth century Australia. Foxcroft sees the results of these attempts as valuable in investigating native problems, but they are valuable beyond this because they are the models for intervention which remain until 1968 in Victoria, 130 years later. They contain data on the structural and functional relationships that obtain between ‘the client’, ‘the helper’, ‘the administrators’, ‘the community’ and ‘the politician’.

The term ‘protection’ is used in its natural, common way.

Ultimately the protectorate failed to achieve its manifest objectives, that is the (protecting) civilizing and Christianizing of the majority of the Aborigines; in effect, the Europeanization of the Aborigines. Foxcroft suggests that either the protectorate failed because
1. it was run incompetently, or
2. it was a scheme of the wrong type, bringing civilization and the natives together in the wrong way.

This is rather too simplistic. The factors are more complex and not easy to untangle.

The Protectorate failed to take account of the basic injustice the Aborigines later came to express as land rights.

It failed to come to terms with very basic notions about human dignity; it generally denied notions of equality; ignored the integrity of Aboriginal culture, and ultimately undermined that hope for the future which lies within every culture. The models selected for change were inadequate because they took account of too few of the relevant factors — cultural, social, political, economic, religious, psychological and administrative.

The humanitarians’ wish for a humane equality appears to be genuine; the politicians understood the humanitarian claims as well as those of the settlers and others and, in part, responded to them; the administrators did their best with the limited resources of knowledge and funds available and the intentionally ambivalent reality they were required to manipulate; the field workers sometimes clearly did believe the Aborigines could adjust if only the opportunity was really to be made available; the Aborigines were at the time as confused about the real situation that was intended as anyone and they lacked the political cohesion which might have allowed them to act. They responded appropriately enough to the reality of the programmes as they perceived them, but because the programmes were in fact such a mish-mash of compromises they ultimately failed.
It is not surprising that the Aborigines responded as they did: during this early period, with some attempts to explore and accommodate the rather odd European intruders, but never wholeheartedly accepting their ways and with apparently some confusion over the inconsistency in behaviour toward them by different people. During the next 40-50 years they were to take much more seriously the offers made as the realization developed that the only land left was what was made available to them. Finally, they were to despair of even being able to negotiate for remaining land, and in the twentieth century the population decrease and its isolation seems to have been an outcome of this awareness.

No policy had universal support. There were numerous ambiguities visible to all. If one examines the people who framed and advocated the policies (the English aristocracy), and then one examines the qualifications of the people who administered the programmes and then those who were the field workers in the programmes (English clerks, teachers, soldiers), one begins to get a notion about the degree of probability that they would resolve the problems. It was not that the most patently unlikely people framed, administered and implemented the solutions to problems of their own construction, but that the problems which they set out to resolve were the wrong ones. In all, the least relevant people rarely taken into account in the planning and implementation of the programmes were the Aborigines. There was a significant gap between stated objectives and available means.

An illustration of the consequences is reflected in the diary of the Assistant Protector of the Goulburn district, the entry 30/8/1839 reads:

I am distressed for the blacks — I cannot feed them as I would — I have no clothing for them — I find I shall be obliged to relinquish giving them flour as my stock is growing short. What a disgrace it is that the Government makes no provision for them.

Early in 1840, there was a policy decision to make supplies available only to the ageing, sick and the young.

In the Lodden region Mt. Franklyn Station was established. It illustrates the pattern that was established in the setting up and disbandment of stations. Begun on 41,073 acres, it serviced about 100 Aborigines in a reasonably well-established settlement in 1842. In 1843 Mt Franklyn was reduced to 112 acres. In 1864 the remaining ten residents were removed to another station and the last of the land disposed of.

The protectors observed with dismay, that the death toll was huge. Each, at some stage, requested medical supplies. The early period of the protectorate, however, suffered from lack of public and state support. There was support for separation of parents and children and evidence in the Chief Protector's reports that he considered the process of administration unimportant and failed to support, assist, guide or supervise his staff and failed to act as a negotiator between them and the politicians.

The correspondence of the department suggests that he was excessively zealous of his formal written communications but provided no leadership to his own departmental staff. Lord Russel (Colonial Secretary) was himself ambivalent about the financing
and management of the Protectorate, as was his successor, Lord Stanley. This is illustrated in correspondence from the Colonial Secretary in 1840 which suggested strongly that 15% of the land tax of the colony should be directed to the Aborigines; then in 1842 this recommendation is withdrawn and replaced with the suggestion that the Governor use his own discretion.

Death of the New South Wales Protectorate:
The press of the period was not without influence and had strong opinion. It suggested editorially that the shooting of Aborigines was a far more efficacious procedure than the mistaken enthusiasm of the protectors. One of the more widely known Protectors (Thomas) in his Ms, reports on the decrease of the Aborigines from a possible 10,000 in Victoria at the time of the settlement to about 2,963 in 1851. The figures plainly cannot be relied upon but assuming there is some dimensional accuracy this is indeed ‘an awful decrease’.

In 1848 the protectorate was brought to an ignominious end. A Select Committee of the Legislative Council was appointed to enquire into the state of the Aboriginal inhabitants of this colony, and more especially in regard to the success or failure of the present protectorate system at Port Phillip.

The Committee did not speak with any of the Protectors but accepted the majority of its evidence from settlers who clearly stated in their replies that they knew nothing of the working of the scheme, but thought that it had been a failure. Rather odd evidence, one might assume, reflecting not knowledge but an attitude of some significance. Perhaps an idea with wide currency?

So the committee concluded that the protectorate had failed to achieve any of its objectives, and while they could offer no alternative, they recommended its abolition. The protectorate, they pointed out, had cost 61,000 Pounds and no new system should be again hastily entered into.

La Trobe believed the failures were due to the false assumption that the Aborigines could be persuaded voluntarily to submit to guidance and that coercion should have been used. He also advocated the separation of children from their parents for education to institutions.

The final suggestion Foxcroft puts forward on the protectorate is that this was a rather new excursion into the administrative field by the state, for example in 1838 there were 20 salaried officers in government service; 9 were connected with Aborigines in that year, total salaries were 3,788 Pounds; Aboriginal staff salaries were 1,840 Pounds. The extraordinary expenditure and activity attained by the Aborigines department by 1842 was altogether unusual at that time.

We will look briefly now at two other experiments in intervention that were tried in Victoria.
Two Further Mission Experiments (Government Sponsored Mission Intervention)

The Buntingdale Methodist Mission 1838-1845:
In 1848 after ten years, the mission was closed down. The total cost had been 9,200 Pounds and it was agreed that ‘not a single individual had been civilized’. It seems probable, however, that for a period some natives may have been temporarily preserved from destruction.

The Merri Creek School (Baptist) 1837-1850:
This was probably the first serious attempt in Victoria (in the Port Phillip District) to formally educate Aborigines. Beginning as a Sunday school run by the Baptists, Protector Thomas thought it unlikely to succeed, especially after Langhorne’s failure. After twelve months Thomas found twenty-seven children regularly attending and an annual cost of 300 Pounds, and was pleasantly surprised. The story of the school is difficult to piece together. It seems to have had its ups and downs. Its successes were limited, and by 1851 the school was closed for lack of numbers. It rather seems that the Aborigines were disenchanted with the educative efforts of the European missionaries who failed to relate to them or acknowledge their importance, except for the young children.

INTERVENTION: PHASE TWO

The 1858 Select Committee on Aborigines — New South Wales Legislative Council
A curious and crucial turning point in Aboriginal affairs takes place, perhaps in association with the 1858 Select Committee. A realization occurs; the Aborigines are getting fewer, the settlers are becoming established, the Aboriginal threat is diminishing and the need to fear and take reprisals has lessened. There exists at least one field worker who can speak with two decades of experience, there is no longer the issue of the paternal British or even New South Wales government to fight against, there is some evidence that in a lowly status the indigenous natives can be of value as cheap labour to the new settlers. The outcome of this awareness is a feeling that now is a moment for generosity of spirit; a moment for stating that a moral wrong is being redressed; a chance to do so without excessive cost or consequence, whatever the outcome. This is the mood of the report of the Select Committee, a committee this time that heard a great deal of evidence from many sources, including those most likely to know, (the Aborigines themselves excepted).

The Select Committee resolved its problem in a reasonable manner. It requested Thomas in mid-1859 to submit a reasonable plan of guardianship. He did so suggesting how the problem should be handled so as to resolve it permanently, i.e.,
1. supply all the natives’ necessary wants, sparing no expense up to 10,000 Pounds per annum,
2. establish food depots everywhere in the charge of trustworthy and humane gentlemen who would serve gratuitously,
3. allot land to tribes, with a board of trustees and missionaries, away from settlers. Let Aborigines select the sites, keep the whites away.
In all, civilize, evangelize and avert the extinction of the race.
The 1860 Act Establishing “The Central Board to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines in the State of Victoria” and its Consequences

Thomas' panacea, then, is isolation, money and proper teaching! The government accepted his recommendation, as can be seen in the Act of 1860. It created a board for the protection of the Aborigines and made it lawful for the government to make regulations:

- prescribing reserves for the use of Aborigines
- prescribing the terms of contracts between Europeans and Aborigines
- distributing monies granted by Parliament for the benefit of Aborigines
- education of native children.

The Board asked for 11,550 Pounds and got 5,000 Pounds.

1861 — Thomas' depots were established by the Board during the next 15 years. Reserves were also established at:

1. Lake Tyers — Church of England — near Lakes Entrance — Bulmer — 80 population.
2. Framlingham — Board — near Warrnambool — 39 population.
6. Corranderrk — Board — 104 population.

Of 1,067 Aborigines said to be in Victoria, 527 were on stations and many of the rest visited the depots. The Board of 1860 was a vigorous and active body. They got things done. But it is difficult to establish what was achieved in the long term. Perhaps the aspect of moral virtue, for they did indeed try. The incontrovertible proof that they could not make the natives successfully and universally into the working-class servants of the white community, could not successfully intervene to prevent their racial extinction, was that the process continued unchecked.

Policy and Programmes 1860-1957 (Settlements, Missions, Reserves, etc.)

The history of the post-protectorate era is of particular significance for two different reasons. Firstly, it is in fact the history of the major settlements because, after the protectorate policy shifted toward the collection of the Aborigines together in the various major geographic regions of the state. 1886 legislation then forced the half-castes to move away from these primary support centres because the government was no longer responsible for them. For the next 36 years these half-castes were forced to adjust to the unprotected environments and they did so by the establishment of river bank and humpy camps (as they came to be known). Initially, these dwellings did not mark them off from the settlers to any significant extent, but by the early 1950's the distinction was to become very noticeable as the Aborigines did not progress at the same rate as the rest of the society. Technological development was to leave them behind in regard to their access to the resources of society. After 1922 there was a dropping off of attention and activity. The colony was becoming heavily settled, the Aborigines remaining on stations were subjected to pressure to move to fewer settlements and this pressure created by the Board, and the desire for land, led to Lake Tyers and
Framlingham being the only settlements remaining by 1958. As well, Aborigines were becoming an ever-smaller proportion of the total population.

The effect of the 1886 legislation and of the 1922 Act was to slough off the half-castes into the areas around the developed European settlement areas and to move the more amenable to the two remaining stations. These moves had the effect of creating linkages between people who previously were from different tribal groups and from different parts of the state. The consequences of this act in Victoria cannot be overestimated; this cross-fertilization has major significance for the development and planning of policy in the years to follow, more especially after 1958.

The second reason why the post-protectorate history is significant is simply that it demonstrates the continuation under changed circumstances of the policies of the past, and the effect of the modifications of this policy can be seen over a long period of time.

Two Significant Pieces of Legislation 1886 and 1910; Tidying Up the State 1924

The most significant legislative Act in Victorian Aboriginal Affairs was almost certainly the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act, which amended and became part of the Aborigines Act of 1869. The effect of the 1886 Act was to alter the definition of half-caste. Half-caste was now defined as “half-castes and all other people of mixed blood”.

Aborigines thus came to include —
1. all fullblooded natives of Victoria
2. all half-castes who associate with an Aborigine
3. any female married to an Aborigine
4. every infant born to an Aborigine (unable to earn his living)
5. a half-caste with a licence to reside on a place set aside for Aborigines.

This effectively meant that the only Aborigines to be the concern of the government were those on settlements and the part-Aborigines had to leave these reserved areas.

Therefore, 24 years later in 1910 when legislation was enacted to extend the powers of the Board to half-castes the provision was totally ineffective. In 1924 at the culmination of settler pressure, and with other concerns on their mind, the government removed all the Aborigines they could to Lake Tyers. They left Framlingham alone to its small population and for the next thirty years focussed their entire attention on Lake Tyers and the Aborigines on it. They closed and revoked all other reserves and virtually no interventive acts occurred outside Lake Tyers in its East Gippsland isolation; certainly no other part-Aborigines were seen as the Board’s responsibility.

THE LAND ISSUE — SOME COMMENTS

It is for two reasons that the land issue must be raised here:
1. It has never ceased to be an issue; and
2. the roots of the issue are buried in the early contacts.
When the Aborigines' freedom to roam over the land was restricted, it had serious repercussions on their culture, but this effect is matched in importance by the fact that the invaders did not accept that the Aborigine had legal right to ownership of the land. The invading British declared all of the land to be owned by the Queen. This act of conquest has never been accepted by the Aboriginal people.

During the period referred to, Aborigines in Victoria were reduced to living on those few areas reserved for their use on the whim of the government. This fact increased their vulnerability to manipulation and their ultimate dependence on the government. In 1843, during the period of the New South Wales Protectorate, one Sub-Protector suggested to the Governor that it was worth extending the area of his station and that although it would be expensive to do so it was necessary to compensate the natives for the loss of their country. This is evidence that the issue was under consideration as early as the first half of the 19th century. It was proposed to the 1849 Select Committee on Aborigines that they create new reserves for the Aborigines. However, the Committee stressed in their recommendations for the abolition of the Protectorate that since good feeling had sprung up between the white and black populations no settlers should be ousted from their runs to try the proposal for new reserves! It seems evident that the land issue was politically important and the general feeling was not favourably disposed towards notions of land rights of any kind for Aborigines.

CONCLUSIONS

For 1835 Read 1957
One of the most interesting aspects of the whole picture to the modern reader is the close resemblance of Langhorne's first mission to that of Lake Tyers during the late 1950's and early 1960's, including the notion of splitting up families. The model established in 1835 lasted, with only minor adjustment, for about 130 years in Victoria. There were elements in the model which were somehow important, elements that made policymakers retain it even though each time it was tried it failed. The Aboriginal population was reduced and their isolation and alienation further increased. These were not perceived as failures, so the process was maintained. Something was learned during the period, but what?

Some Early Programme Contributions to Later Social Planning in Aboriginal Affairs
The lessons and mistakes of this early period of relatively intense interventive experimentation have not been helpful in eliminating inappropriate tactics and guiding workers toward more appropriate tactics and overall strategies; in establishing principles and methods on which planned Broad-Spectrum Social Intervention needs to rest if it is to be administratively viable and generally successful today. In fact, it is not until the late 1960's that the methods described in the early programmes of the protectorate were modified and made more effective so that it became apparent that a totally new strategy had been introduced. Ironically the new programmes seem not to have been based extensively on the lessons of the past. It is tantalizing to observe that there were very constructive elements in most of the early programmes, but the mixture of elements was never quite right nor complete, and what could be learned from the experiences of
success or failure of each succeeding era was neither learned nor used.

Foxcroft reaches a number of conclusions which can be challenged. He concludes that fullblood Aborigines who lose their traditional culture will probably fail to survive into the future. This is so regardless of the attempts of education to offer a new purpose. This conclusion is based on a false premise. It is assumed that the activities of the interveners were, in fact, predicated by an intention to educate the Aborigine to a new life of purpose and it seems clear this was not in fact the case at all, or was at least a gross oversimplification. The objectives of intervention were never so sharp and clear. Foxcroft thus assumed that survival would lie in intermixture with the white, which he points out is no real solution because eventually the black would be bred out and the race completely disappear. Therefore he concludes that Victorian experience shows that Australian Aborigines 'have so far proved incapable of any sort of successful adaptation to a white environment, and that we cannot learn much from the history of her native policy except what to avoid in future. Nor can we learn much from Victoria's treatment of her half-castes.' He goes on: 17

It cannot be said with truth that Victoria has done much to absorb these into her population. The half or quarter-caste is not given adequate opportunities to become a normal citizen. Regarded as inferior and feeling himself inferior to the whites, demoralized by doles of supplies and government charity, the half-caste rarely develops into a self-reliant character. A new approach is necessary if this problem is to be solved.

It would appear that he was quite correct.

Some forty or fifty years after settlement of Australia there appears to have been an acute consciousness among the authorities of a duty to the natives. The proposed remedies, however, were usually specious, based upon little or no knowledge of the natives or the human problems facing them. A charitable interpretation might suggest that the will was there but not the knowledge. Experiments of the kind made could be expected to promote the extinction of the native race. Even more likely to be disastrous was the possible conflict of settlers' interests with the claims of the natives to justice. The chances of developing a successful native policy were therefore exceedingly slight. It is extraordinarily significant and interesting to note the beginnings of nearly every major interventive strategy considered feasible in the early 20th century appearing first in the early nineteenth century and observe that 100 years later no radical alternatives were being proposed. Yet it will become clear that in 1968 something was added that was not present in the programmes we have examined up to 1957.

1957 — The Consequences of 123 Years of (Planned) Intervention

It is agreed, almost without exception in the hundreds of books, pamphlets and articles about Aborigines available today, that the Aboriginal culture could not be expected to survive the rapid ingress of European culture; that, deprived of their territory, the culture of the Aboriginal people was most unlikely to remain viable. Without its culture, traditions, folkways, mores and beliefs almost any culture can be expected to yield to despair and, without any apparent hope for the future, to
respond with apathy and anomie so characteristic of many Aboriginal communities even today.

We know of no actual tribal groupings remaining in Victoria today. We are aware of no traditional language nor customs except a few fragments known to a limited number of very old people. Both the traditional language and the customs appear to have been lost during the past century. There are known to be no more than one or two Aborigines in Victoria today who claim to be fullbloods.

In 1957 it was safe to say that governments, missions and settlers for more than 123 years in Victoria had treated Aborigines as inferior beings with roughly equivalent status to young children and mentally incompetent persons.

Legally, in Victoria up to 1957 no person defined as an Aborigine had real citizenship. Lacking most of the rights and responsibilities available to other citizens they were not permitted to drink alcoholic beverages, were not free to enter or leave reserves set aside for their use without permission, did not have access to normal education, did not receive normal rates of pay, did not have equal access to social services and other institutional services in the Australian society. The details are adequately documented elsewhere. 18

These same sources document a great deal of the story of degradation and societal destruction that stands as the current status of much of the history of Aboriginal/European contact. The effect of contact had been to create amongst Aboriginal groups extreme dependence on others and apathy toward the future. Aborigines had been cut off from ties with their cultural past and they existed in an environment which lacked opportunity for the development of a satisfying life style either for individuals or for the group as a whole. They had every reason to continue to expect that there was little hope of their attaining equality with the white community or with the white public servants with whom they came in contact. Their experience had demonstrated that participation in European social institutions was not permitted.

Only a small minority appear to have been able to break away from being 'Aboriginal'. This occurred with Aborigines who were lightly coloured and usually outstandingly independent, intelligent or fortunate. Thus some individuals did succeed, rearing their families in almost complete isolation from kin and home. Often these few succeeded in breaking the chain of poverty and degradation. Several thousands did not. To those planning intervention programmes these simple data were not available until Barwick 19 postulated it, and it was not until 1965 that I was actually able to trace three families who had successfully made this break. Doing so was a sensitive and difficult task and after contact had been established through a chain of relatives it was possible to maintain the contact only long enough to learn of some of the difficulties involved for the people concerned even in the second generation of children. In most rural and urban centres around Victoria, Aborigines were not acceptable as peers to white Australian communities. For similar situations with Amerindians see Collier 20 and Fox 21. I am unable to specify any factors which stand out that would account for those families
who broke away from the constricting life on the settlement and sub-standard camps.

A Re-Examination of the Dilemmas

Foxcroft\(^{22}\) states that in more than 100 years of experimentation Victoria did not succeed in working out a successful method of preserving her Aborigines. Only when extensive racial intermixture had taken place did the prospects of survival for Aborigines improve.

I propose that for the colonial and local administrations, Aboriginal policy was as successful as most European people could have hoped or expected. It is quite out of character to presume that the idealism of the humanitarians represented reality, in practice, either for the majority of people or perhaps even for themselves. With only limited exceptions, miscegenation and cultural absorption have been the favoured objectives in cultural and race relations. Perhaps the only policy that failed was the overt humanitarian one. The politicians and settlers nearly succeeded in a policy whose extant objectives would probably read: Aborigines are second-rate citizens (if citizens at all), they do not have equal right to land because they cannot defend it, therefore they ought not survive. Any efforts to assist them are doomed to failure. It is perhaps sad, but the meek do not inherit the earth. Foxcroft was not really naive about Aboriginal policy; he perceived that Euthanasia, in fact, has been the aim of native policy in Victoria after 1850\(^{23}\).

Perhaps the sanctions in traditional Aboriginal society were less negotiable than those of Western industrial (technological) society. Western industrial society values are so strong and so lacking in relativism, that all other peoples tend to be seen by Westerners in Western terms, that is: how useful are they, how much economically can be made from them.

What does the study of intervention programmes show? That there were some fundamental value differences that led to dilemmas. It is not immediately possible to see how a belief in the essential humanness and equality of men can be reconciled with the belief in the sub-human status of Aborigines that pervades the general literature of the time. It is not easy to see how the desire to allow Aborigines to establish themselves as some kind of citizens on the land could be reconciled with the avaricious and pervasive desire for land by the settlers. It is difficult to see how Governors and politicians could have resisted these desires. On the other hand, they also lacked the kind of understanding acquired by the protectors, inspectors and guardians (the field workers) who lived amongst, knew and often respected the Aborigines. Most of these groups were unable to recognize the problems that faced a lay Board charged to undertake a duty requiring for its performance knowledge and resources beyond their grasp. And, of course, the Aborigines about whom there was so much discussion periodically, made their feelings known and were thus another group of people in the situation. The very existence of these active, mainly ignorant, poorly integrated, poorly communicating groups in Aboriginal affairs ensured the existence of major dilemmas for policy-makers, and the compromises were not only in the half-hearted and usually inadequately financed programmes but also in the stop-start nature of those programmes once conceived.
There were simply too many competing people and policy objectives. Protection was hardly congruent with the establishment of independence. Feeding, clothing, protecting the Aborigines and encouraging them to work was hardly consistent with rending families apart; husbands from wives, parents from children.

Overall the experiments of the first 120-130 years were unsuccessful. Aborigines made only temporary and superficial contact with European ways of education, work, housing, etc., and rejected it. But then in the early stages they could not possibly have been motivated to accept it, they were, in fact, locked out of it. By the 1860's, 70's and 80's those who survived recognized that some kind of relationship was essential if they were to survive at all, even though they were in the main excluded from any real relationship with the society, and there came to be motivation alongside a history of failure to achieve equality of almost any kind to European settlers, administrators and governments.

At some time, some person or another has attributed the early failures to almost every possible cause, e.g.:
- the closeness of the towns to the settlement
- the low habits of the whites associated with the Aborigines
- the racial characteristics of the Aborigines
- the government’s incompetence and lack of finance
- the speed of change
- the futility of settling the natives in their own territory
- the futility of settling the natives with traditional enemies
- later, as the guardians and protectors came to identify with the Aborigines, their complicity was blamed.

The early experiences should have clarified to planners the necessity of appropriate motivation for any planned outcome to be effective. From the letterbooks and newspapers and other source documents, including protectors’ reports, we learn that the Aborigines were not the same throughout the colony and they established what appears to have been constructive relationships with many different groups and individuals. In observing the programmes it seems that the non-professional orientation had significant repercussions; there were varying standards of field work and administration; there were varying degrees of commitment to various often ill-defined outcomes. There were many levels of skill and differing ethics and intelligence amongst the field and administrative staff on the various programmes. There were dilemmas caused by the distances involved, which meant that some areas and stations were never visited by the Boards while others were. Difficulties in communication and transport created dilemmas because decisions had to be made without evidence being procurable either in time or perhaps at all. Thus some compromise had to be made and frequently programmes were the outcome of compromises that, as we have seen, resolved nothing.

Settlers’ interests could be met if there were fewer Aborigines and those remaining were less independent and threatening. By the late 19th century they had achieved this outcome by direct and indirect means. Some of the humanitarians wanted
protection for the Aborigines and survival in some kind of respectful relationship.

The settlers, at best; desired servant/master relationships. The humanitarians were less successful overall than the settlers. The Aborigines wanted survival; in cultural terms they failed. However, there are Aborigines today, although without their traditional culture, whose numbers in Victoria are increasing.

These experiments have taught us that administrations need at least commitment and machinery to cope with differing interests if ineffective programmes are to be avoided. No programme has proven successful where the goals were not clearly understood by someone and it seems to be desirable that they be widely known. At the same time the programmes can be expected to fail if, in fact, their covert or extant objectives are in direct opposition to their stated or manifest ones. Observing and analysing the programmes highlights the interplay and interdependence of actions and events. In a complex human situation the systems perspective suggests that the actions and decisions of each of the participants interact with the actions and decisions of the others involved, thus no single event can be judged or studied in isolation.

Many specific projects were tried and were, to varying degrees, successful. In the end most broke down without resolving the situation. It appears that there was a need for more commitment by the Aborigines and by the administrators to the goals of integration with Europeans than was the case. From the experiments of the century Aborigines emerged as capable of coping with education and were, in the opinion of their teachers, as able as any European. From the Corranderrk and Cummeroogunga experiences there is evidence that Aborigines were capable of effective political action and participation, that they had a capacity for dignity and endurance.

Ultimately Victorian society tried at some time and in some place almost all of the separate processes of coping with dissimilar cultural forms, from destruction to... they never quite achieved the multi-cultural society. The dilemma of status was not fully resolved by 1957, but Aborigines had ceased to be perceived as primitives by government and had acquired clear legal status. The politicians resolved the dilemma of many differing pressures as they always have; by devising ways of maintaining a balance. The politicians mostly had no commitment to Aborigines as such and when one considers the process of election and the constitution of the electorate this would not seem to be unexpected, nor in our system an insuperable obstacle to development.

By 1957 in Victoria the dilemma of the Aborigines' relationship to European law had been resolved. They had become equal before the law, including obtaining the right to vote, drink and receive social services unless they lived on Lake Tyers. Likewise, the dilemma about their right to maintain their traditional culture was resolved by its destruction and disappearance. However, the dilemma as to how much of our culture they should be allowed, or encouraged, to participate in was not resolved and was to remain a dilemma to be resolved by future administrations.
The movement away from overt harsh and destructive violence directed the future to a considerable extent. The community was not ready to tolerate some interventive methods any more (for example, extermination). The results of past policy and programmes could be seen in 1957. The social and physical deprivation was obvious amongst Aboriginal communities around the state. The Aborigines who had survived could not conceivably threaten the security of the vast urban communities, but they posed a growing threat both to 'standards' and to law and order. Citizen demands for action led to an official enquiry (with which the next Chapter is concerned) and resulted in major changes in Aboriginal affairs administration and interventive strategies. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the nature of the new strategies.
End Notes — Chapter 3

1. For details of all Victorian Legislation see Appendix A
   For details of all Official Enquiries see Appendix B
   For details of all Reserves, Dates of Establishment and Land Areas see Appendix C.

2. For support of this position see for example:
   See also: Outcasts in White Australia (Canberra, 1971) Passim.


4. For some of the following details of programmes I am indebted to Barwick Op.Cit., and
   Rebellion at Corranderrk a Ms. in prepn. also to E.J.B. Foxcroft, Australian Native Policy
   (Melb., 1941). Passim.


6. Ibid., P.12.

7. Ibid., P.20.

8. Ibid., P.5.

9. Ibid., P.5.

10. Ibid., PP.24-25.

11. Ibid., P.36.

12. Ibid., P.89.


14. Foxcroft, P.98.

15. Ibid., P.105.

16. For details of legislation throughout the whole period 1835-1972 see Appendix A.


18. Barwick, Rebellion; R. Brough Smyth, The Aborigines of Victoria (2 Vols. Melb., 1878);
   J. Inglis, The Dispersal of Some Aboriginal Families, in M. Reay (Ed.), Aborigines Now
   (Sydney, 1964); Rowley, Outcasts; Rowley, The Destruction; H.G. Turner, The History of
   Corranderrk Aboriginal Station, 9th Annual Report, Vic. Aboriginal Group, (Melb., 1941).


21. F. Gearing, R.McC. Netting, L.R. Peattie (Eds.), Documentary History of the Fox Project

22. Foxcroft, P.100.

23. Ibid., P.101.
Between 1945 and 1955 it had been rare for the Aborigines Protection Board to meet more than once per year. When they met it was primarily to discuss Lake Tyers and its problems. During the early 1950's considerable pressure built up in rural areas demanding government action over the appalling living conditions of the Aborigines, many of whom were settled in river bank humpy camps and in shanties on the outskirts of country towns. This pressure was supported by the Melbourne daily press and on 20th December, 1955 the Governor in Council made an order requesting a:

'Report on the Operation of the Aborigines Act 1928 and the regulations and orders made thereunder.'

The report was presented by its author (a Stipendiary Magistrate) Charles McLean on 18th January, 1957. The report follows a period of almost total government inaction in the field and is followed by fifteen years of steadily escalating activity culminating in a professionally planned programme of considerable national significance, not only in the quantity of its performance but in the quality of its programmes.

McLean's terms of reference were straightforward and reasonable. He was to make recommendations regarding the system of administration which he did by establishing the Aborigines Welfare Board structure, one that remained little changed for a decade.

He was to report on the number, distribution and living conditions of Aborigines, ¼ caste and above. He did this as best he was able, establishing 1,346 persons as the number (more than half of whom were children), and describing their generally poor and squalid conditions in each of the major centres throughout the state. He reported favourably on their capacity to live as other Victorians.

He was asked to report on factors militating against their absorption and he postulated the existence of the 'viscious circle' (poverty recreating the circumstances for future poverty), recognizing the part played by the Aborigines and their environment, both physical and social.

He was asked to report on the measures that should be taken with respect to Lake Tyers. He cautiously suggested a major reduction in its size; 200 acres of the 5,000 was to be retained for intensive farming. He stated, however, that he wanted the final decision left open to the new Board.

McLean believed in egalitarianism, rejected separate laws and was conscious of the contentious nature of objectives: segregation, absorption, miscegenation, integration and assimilation. He took an assimilationist position.

He was aware that time would be needed to effect change. He states that while homes were needed for some, he believed that settlements would be required as a buffer temporarily but that they were not a long term solution. He also clearly recommended
a policy of 'individualization' rather than 'mass' programmes. One of the
difficulties with these objectives is that there is little evidence to support the success
of assimilationist programmes in the short term (2-3 decades) and individually
oriented programmes require 'precious' attitudes and very extensive staff resources.

A final issue in the McLean report is his critique of past administrations. He criticizes
two aspects specifically: the infrequency of meeting of recent Boards and the error
of the assumption that compulsion would enable the half-castes to overcome their
disabilities. Throughout the whole of the report the fact that stands out very early
is that McLean sees Aborigines as poor whites. He fails to grasp their relatedness
to each other or the notion of a Victorian Aboriginal community. He managed only
to observe in passing that whites treated Aborigines as a community.

He believed that it was difficult to assess their capacity to sustain regular work because
of their appalling living conditions in river bank humpies. He thought assessment of
capacity difficult, too, because of the habit of sharing accommodation and possessions
which militated against regular routines; the lack of education, the inevitable itinerancy
which led to severe limitations on potential employability. McLean was, however,
particularly careful to note that in each of the places he visited there was a sprinkling
of people of Aboriginal descent who had risen above their old surroundings, lived in
good homes in the towns, sent their children regularly to school, and generally lived
up to their responsibilities as citizens.

On the question of their capacity to maintain themselves and their families according
to the general standards of the Victorian community he pointed out that this meant
innate capacity and that 'as to their mental capacity most authorities now agree that
there is no innate racial inferiority of intelligence in the Aborigine'. This statement was
of considerable import for the years ahead because it set the seal of what was to be
considered to be true about Aborigines.

He proceeded to indicate that Aborigines had to be lifted from their sub-standard
way of life with respect to housing, education and employment. He recognized that
the deficiencies of Aborigines already adult could not be expected to be overcome;
a start had to be made sooner or later and for a very potent reason: 'Fresh generations
are growing up, the number which will have eventually to be assimilated is becoming
larger, and there is scope for immediate action in many directions.' (p.15).

McLean then made several recommendations as to the form of the new administration
on the basis of visits to examine the New South Wales administration. The decision
was based solely on the past and present experience in New South Wales and in Victoria.
Administratively, it seemed to McLean 'clear that the matter must be handled on an
individual basis, rather than in the mass'. (p.16).
These guidelines were to set the scene for the following decade. They were followed almost to the letter.

The duties of the superintendent were specified and were included in the legislation, which followed closely the recommendations of the McLean Report. The superintendent was to make an intensive survey of all the Aboriginal localities throughout the state, and report to the Board on such details as housing conditions, sanitation, health and employment. His next task was to screen housing applicants and subsequently to supervise them. He had to contact teachers to ensure regular school attendance, employment problems to consider, social services and welfare to provide for these in necessitous circumstances.

McLean finally stated that the general approach of the Aborigines Welfare Board should be: ‘The development of an active policy of assimilation’, which he also saw as requiring special qualities in the superintendent and his officers. The report discussed housing at considerable length. It recommended a separate fund should be established to finance Aborigines who needed housing and to offer self-help to those who wanted to improve their lot. It suggested that there should be an intentional policy of placing Aborigines in groups of 2-4 in country towns where there was work available and splitting up the Lake Tyers community. This created, in fact, many of the real difficulties that lay ahead. McLean also recommended what has become known as half-way housing, that is sub-standard or sub-conventional homes of cheaper design for people who are less likely to be able to cope. He cites a West Australian precedent for this proposal. For numerous reasons which will be outlined, this suggestion has proven to be a poor and costly experiment in Victoria and in other places where Aborigines are primarily urban dwellers.

It is significant in the light of Board activities later than in his final paragraph on housing he does not recommend a proposal put to the government to acquire land in the forest area at Maroopna and establish a sub-standard housing settlement there. He states:

If it were destined to provide a solution of the problem the expense might be justified, though the cost of clearing the land, building, and installing light, water, and other amenities, would be very great. For the protection of the property, and to maintain some semblance of order, a resident manager would also be essential. It could not be claimed that the proposal would contribute in any way to assimilation. At best, it would be merely palliative, and would perpetuate, in somewhat better conditions, the segregation of the residents from the rest of the community. More probably, with the influx of so many others during the fruit season, slum conditions would again develop. (p.18).

His recommendation was ignored but he was proven to be correct in this regard.

For education he recommended desegregated schools and the closing of the Lake Tyers and Framlingham schools; it remained however, for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, a decade later, to implement this proposal.
He saw the need to establish legislative provisions that ensured the effective implementation of assimilation policies, and saw the basic aim as: '... to bring about a status of equality ...' He argued therefore that because many of the existing obstacles had a psychological origin, legislative discrimination between the two races should be avoided as far as possible. He therefore recommended NO detailed provisions involving control, such as were in force in other states, nor any special provision by which Aboriginal children may be removed from the custody of their parents.

At the time of the implementation of this report and the years immediately following the author was in contact with a significant number of the white activists in Aboriginal Affairs organisations: See Boas and Brown (1958).

McLean pointed out something which had not been clear previously, that with regard to citizen rights:
In Victoria, aborigines, including full-bloods, have the same right and obligation in law to enrol as electors, and to vote at Commonwealth and State elections, as other citizens.

All Commonwealth Social Service Benefits, including unemployment relief, are equally available to them, except that while they are being maintained by the State (i.e. resident on Lake Tyers station) they are not regarded as eligible for pensions or child endowment. (pp.20-21).

Finally with regard to intoxicating liquor and its supply to Aborigines, McLean suggested that there existed considerable doubt about the scope of existing prohibitions but in any case:
In my opinion, this semblance of prohibition might well be abolished. It causes resentment, leading to an attitude of defiance towards what is regarded as a 'white man's law', and it tends to foster surreptitious drinking of the more harmful cheap wines and methylated spirits. Further, its enforcement is impossible owing to the difficulty of legal proof. (p.20).

McLean also recommended that the outmoded and psychologically destructive section of the Police Offences Act S.69(1) which forbade wandering in the company of an Aboriginal native, which act deemed one to be an idle and disorderly person, be removed: It was. He also recommended removing the section about taking an Aborigine from Victoria.

Finally, he suggested that Aborigine be redefined as including any person having an admixture of Australian Aboriginal blood, and that the new administrative unit be called the Aborigines Welfare Board.

McLean persuaded the government to take a major step in accepting responsibility for all people of Aboriginal descent in Victoria. His reminder that 'no early or spectacular termination of the problem can be expected' was to be valuable to future administrators in their dealings with the impatient citizens and, on some occasions, politicians opposed to developmental programmes of the sort that were developed.
So far as methods of intervention are concerned, he could suggest little more.

McLean had undertaken a difficult task without any knowledge of the experience of other nations or the professional welfare planners of other countries. He was far more than a humane man, as can be seen in his recommendations, and considering the limitations and constraints and the ethos of the time in which he undertook his report he set the stage for the developments that were to follow, as soundly as the most enlightened activists at that time did in fact hope for.

With regard to recommendations for future administration, McLean put forward a structure that was followed almost to the letter and, ironically, was not dissimilar to previous administrative structures. As will be seen, it contained fundamental structural deficiencies as a framework for the administration of a complex welfare programme. Its inadequacies finally led to its demise and replacement by the considerably improved structure of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

McLean proposed an extensive change in each major dimension.

i) The structure of the Board had to be changed to include suitable, responsible people who met at frequent intervals;

ii) the areas of responsibility had to include all the major areas of life: health, housing, education, employment, etc.

iii) the responsibility was to be for all people of Aboriginal descent;

iv) for servicing the Board and the Aborigines a Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare should be appointed with an assistant, a Welfare Officer;

v) funds should be available for housing and for providing material assistance which should be done on an individual, rather than a mass, basis;

vi) that all remaining discriminatory legislation be removed.

In restructuring the Board, McLean followed closely the New South Wales Board, recommending high ranking departmental representatives from the Departments of Health, Housing and Education. The Chairman of the Board would be the Under-Secretary and further members would consist of the Superintendent, an Aborigine and a Sociologist/Anthropologist, which constituted a total of nine or more members all appointed, except the Chairman, by the Governor-in-Council.

The objectives expressed by the McLean report were direct, consistent, assimilationist and realistic in their context.

The McLean report wrenched Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria into a new era.

End Notes — Chapter 4

1. The full text of the McLean Report is a matter of Published Public Record and no good purpose is served by summarizing its contents here. It should perhaps be noted here, however, that McLean's many insights were taken seriously and incorporated into both the structure and philosophy of the Aborigines Welfare Board.

   Nb. All quotations in this chapter are taken from the McLean Report and all page numbers refer to it.

CHAPTER 5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE 1957-1968 (THE ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD)

INTRODUCTION

The McLean Report recommendations were translated into legislation and a structure was established, goals stated and staff appointed. The Aborigines Welfare Board began operations in 1957. Their first annual report is examined in considerable detail because it indicates the Aborigines Welfare Board's position on nearly all the specific areas of activity. From organizational considerations, the chapter then moves to individual ones. This is followed by a closer look at the Aborigines Welfare Board in action, first through two case studies of Aboriginal families, then through a case study of the activities of a Welfare Officer, and finally through the appraisal of the case records and the staff. The last half of the chapter is devoted to an examination of the general policy of the Aborigines Welfare Board from 1958-1967 and the specific policy and programmes in the areas of health, education and housing.

Certain key observations relate to the period: humanitarian policy statements of various kinds are made, but they are not able to be translated into action programmes. They are statements about the desirability of outcomes but are deficient in that they fail to specify resources needed, processes to be used and ways to proceed.

The detailed examination of three of the major areas of activity illustrates the limited achievement and demonstrates the significance of inaccurate data (the belief that the population was smaller than it was) and the disaster of inadequate resources, as well as the significance of planning and implementation concepts and skills.

Even the major public documents, especially the 1966 Policy document which followed a reconstitution of the Aborigines Welfare Board membership in July 1965, and crises such as occurred at frequent intervals, do not account for the changes which led to the demise of the Board and the creation of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Yet this change led to another major change in the objectives of the government programmes, as will be seen in Chapter 6. For the Aborigines Welfare Board, the goal of Assimilation remained pre-eminent and indisputable and was a significant shift from Protection.

OVERVIEW OF THE ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Under the provisions of Section 3 of the Aborigines Act 1957, the Aborigines Welfare Board was constituted as follows:
1. The Chief Secretary, or such other minister as is, for the time being, nominated by the Chief Secretary, who shall be Chairman.
2. The Under-Secretary.
3. One member on the nomination of the Minister of Education.
4. One member on the nomination of the Minister of Housing.
5. One member on the nomination of the Minister of Health.
6. Five other members of whom (if there are such persons suitable and willing to be appointed) two shall be Aborigines, and one shall be an expert in Anthropology or Sociology.

The Board at first met fortnightly and then later, monthly. Its members travelled the state, met people, made policy decisions, acted to help individual families, purchased land and houses, promised aid and listened to the Superintendent's reports of his activities. They issued press statements, and they planned the activities for each year. They entered into agreements with other government departments, especially the Housing Commission of Victoria with whom they had very close ties through both their first and their last chairman.

As time passed and the staff increased, the activities of Board members cut across those of field staff. As the volume of work increased it became more difficult for Board members to remain in close touch with the activities of field staff and with administrative staff also, whose duties increasingly involved them with field staff programmes. The Superintendent (of Aborigines Welfare) was responsible for the management of the Department, but had no control over the executive actions of the individual Board members. Nor had he control over the budget, expenditures, or field policy. Board members could and did issue instructions directly to field officers. The situation was an uneasy one at best. From the middle of the 1960's there were numerous major clashes between Board members and field staff over policy issues. Frequently the administrative staff aligned themselves with the Board position. Ultimately the knowledge and judgments of the professional and other field staff was fed to the Board via a sympathetic faction that developed and it was this faction, supported by present and past field staff, who finally were responsible for illuminating the unworkable nature of the Aborigines Welfare Board administrative structure.

ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD POLICY 1957-58

General Assimilation Policy

The Aborigines Welfare Board met for the first time on the 27th August, 1957, and its report for the year ended 30 June 1958 is, like the McLean report an exceptionally significant document. It states clearly that it perceives its manifest objective as "... power to assist anyone of Aboriginal blood to attain the status of a full-accepted member of the general community." (Annual Report, 1958, p.3.)

In describing policy, the report states that the Act places on the Board "... responsibility for the promotion of the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of Aborigines with a view to their assimilation into the general community." (Annual Report, 1958, p.5.)

It then proceeds to define assimilation: "... it simply means that in the course of time all persons of Aboriginal descent will be merged into the general community and live in the same way as white Australians." (Annual Report, 1958, p.5.)

It is significant that they stress that this does NOT involve policies of inter-marriage, or of the extinction of the racial identity of the Aborigines.
In the course of interviews with members of the Board on several occasions it was evident that they were quite clear about what was meant and they did not, in fact, conceive of miscegenation as necessarily part of the assimilation process. However, they conceded that it was probable this would occur as increasing numbers of Aborigines became more sophisticated and adopted European standards. They meant, as they continued to mean throughout the period, something closer to cultural absorption; they believed that Aborigines should remain physiologically visible but otherwise be identical with ‘ordinary’ Europeans: a normative approach to Aborigines which was to blossom to maturity with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs ten years later. Most of the decade of the Aborigines Welfare Board administration was devoted to establishing this policy concept. The Board was aware that the use of the word assimilation was contested by people:

Who feel that it implies a demand on Aborigines to submerge their racial identity.

In the view of the Board, however, this is rather academic objection, and in consideration of policy, it has approached the task in a spirit of inspiring in the Aborigines pride in their race and a desire to see it make its full contribution to the social, economic and political life of the Australian community.

They continue: ‘On the other hand there is a need for expanding amongst white people a readiness to recognize their Aboriginal fellow-citizens as beings of the same human clay, with much the same abilities and imperfections as they will, on reflection, recognize in themselves.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.5.)

Housing
The Board, cognisant of its need to establish itself in the housing field, and following generally the recommendations of the McLean report (based on data the superintendent was updating and correcting), began to buy land in various likely towns throughout Victoria with a view to future building programmes (e.g. Robinvale, Dimboola, Orbost). As a result of the Board’s surveys they came to the conclusion that ‘... it would not be practicable to remove... many of the people... from shack life to normal housing without a certain amount of training and preparation.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.6.)

Note that they jumped from this premise to the ‘policy of providing staging houses which will serve as a transition between camp life and life in towns under fully assimilated conditions.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.6.)

There is, of course, no necessary logical connection between the need for training and preparation for standard housing and sub-standard or staging housing. This link, while it has been made frequently in Victoria and in other states, remains even up to the present one of those pieces of interventive mythology unsupported and unsubstantiated by any single evaluative study carried out in Australia to date. On the contrary the prime facie logic is rather that one move rather than two will create less personal disturbance and disruption.

Board policy was clearly independent of that recommended by McLean. In 1958 the Board went ahead and built ten sub-standard cottages at Rumbalara (Mooroopna) in the face of the recommendation by McLean that this would be an unwise and unconstructive move. It is significant to note that in 1968, when the settlement had
been up for a decade and was on the point of being closed, an estimate by the Housing Commission of Victoria as to the total cost of buildings and land to that point in time was $72,598.83. The initial cost of each house was $2,800 (i.e. $28,000 for the ten).

The ultimate cost of each house was $7,200. The cottages were, by the standards of the time, rather sparse and somewhat primitive in terms of structure, privacy and facilities for bathing, cooking and heating.

They were not separated by fences. Economic rent calculated by the Housing Commission of Victoria was 39/- ($3.90) per week, which was heavily subsidized by the Board so that tenants paid only 15/- ($1.50) per week. The Board’s 1958 report states: ‘They are to be staging houses only — a tremendous advance from the river humpies — and the Board’s policy will be to provide town houses at reasonable rents for those families who improve sufficiently in the new settlement to warrant a further advance in housing.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.7.)

And of course in a physical sense this motion of advance was real. A part-time rent collector and supervisor was appointed; he lived in Maroopna, and ‘supervises the houses generally, collects the rents, and reports circumstances and incidents warranting investigation by the Board’s full-time Welfare staff.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.7.)

Furniture for the cottages was supplied as a gift by the Furniture Manufacturers Guild.

Education
With regard to education, the Board believed, as part of their assimilation policy, that educational opportunities were available to Aboriginal children on the same basis as other children, but recognised — as had McLean — that Aborigines had difficulty in taking full advantage of these facilities. The factors referred to were to be cited for the next 7-8 years: inadequate home facilities for study, overcrowding, parental ignorance, parental mobility, and no future value perceived by either parents or children in education. To these factors were to be added a later recognition that teachers developed negative attitudes which resulted in low expectations for their students. As well, prejudice experienced by Aboriginal children as they entered their teens also negatively influenced their attitudes toward education. Other aspects and consequences will be examined later. The Board’s interventive response to this situation was to state that its officers ‘will give attention to educational problems while on field work and bring them to the notice of the appropriate authorities.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.8.)

They were aware that improved housing and a brighter outlook for the future would help children to perceive the benefit of proceeding with education. There was a realization that the deficiencies were related to attendance, performance, time at which the child commenced school and time at which the child left school, but for several years the only interventive action, apart from encouragement (that is, exhortation), was to be some financial aid at the beginning of the year to some families on the assumption that this would overcome some of the difficulties and barriers. It did not prove to be as effective as was hoped when the grants were introduced in the early 1960’s.
Health
With regard to health, the Aborigines Welfare Board recognized a fundamental factor, viz., that Aboriginal health problems were substantially of the same nature as those of the general community, aggravated as they were by bad living conditions. The Board also expressed concern in its first report at what it believed were some unsatisfactory child care practices, but these were not defined and it hoped they would be investigated by its welfare staff. They suggested that the interventive function of the welfare staff would be to give advice and instruction to Aboriginal parents as they travelled around the state. It was assumed that staff would arrange medical treatment when they thought it was required. The Board also expressed the opinion that improved housing would provide the solution to some of these health problems. No trained nursing staff were appointed outside Lake Tyers until 1961. There is an implicit assumption that things must be done for Aborigines and a conclusion that things would as a result improve.

Employment
Aboriginal workers were seen to be inadequately employed. Some of the explanation was tied up with overall living conditions as part of the unsatisfactory cycle of continuing poverty. The resultant prejudices of many employers was recognized. The Board went to some lengths to disclaim the ‘walkabout’ myth and pointed out that this was frequently no more than a search for work; that it was unrelated to the ‘traditional’ customs of the north. The Board’s interventive proposal was to advise and assist Aborigines ‘to take and hold permanent employment and the Board looks for sympathetic employers who are willing to give Aborigines a trial.’ (Annual Report, 1958, p.9.)

Unfortunately the relation of this problem area to others was not given much detailed consideration at the time. A great number of very unhappy experiences were to befall Aborigines and the Board before the full significance of the situation became clear. Some employers, willing to ‘give Aborigines a go’ allowed Board officers to recommend Aborigines who frequently stayed for only a few months. After a year of high turnover and other problems with relatives and acquaintances, several employers banned further Aboriginal employment in their industry. (Data, based on records of the author as an Aborigines Welfare Board Welfare Officer 1964-66.)

Public Education
The Board recognized the need for some kind of public education, but they saw what was needed as talking to organized meetings of service, church, women’s and other organizations. They established a couple of Local Committees and involved service organizations in projects. The Board believed that ignorance rather than racial prejudice was in many cases a significant factor in the response of communities to Aborigines.

Voluntary Organizations
The Aborigines Welfare Board was established as the outcome of extensive citizen pressure. More than twenty voluntary organizations were active in Victoria in 1958.2 One of the early actions of the government was to warn the public that some of these were not directing the majority of their funds to Aborigines. They also warned organizations that the government would take action if they found evidence of
exploitation of Aborigines by organizations. The Board tried to co-ordinate the voluntary organizations, some of whom had established themselves to co-ordinate the others; they were unsuccessful. Aboriginal affairs, for the moment, were an arena where every do-gooder could feel an expert. There was plenty of public sympathy for the raising of funds; it was an ‘interest’. The Board sounded the following note in its report of 1958:

It is apparent that serious disservice to the real welfare of Aborigines has been done by organizations and individuals who, no doubt with the best of charitable intentions, have responded to requests for HAND-OUTS either of money or in kind. This has fostered an attitude of mendicancy and encouraged the development of indolent habits, and as well, has undermined the morale of many of the Aboriginal recipients who have grown up regarding themselves as units of an under-privileged class apart in the community.

‘The policy of the Board is to discourage activities of that kind’. (Annual Report, 1958, p.9.)

Unfortunately, the Board had no real adequate or believable (meaningful) alternative to offer. It is important to note that exactly ten years later the 1968 Annual Report of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, pages 9 and 10, reiterate these sentiments precisely, e.g. ‘The long practised “handout” system under which government and non-government agencies alike have operated since 1834 has brought nothing but degradation to the Aboriginal people.’

Resources
The difference in policy and practice between the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is not in the words or sentiments expressed but in the effectiveness with which the social policy and practice was to be implemented. The Board had succeeded in employing a superintendent who held anthropological qualifications and eight years experience in New South Wales. They also attracted a social worker. These two comprised the total welfare staff outside Lake Tyers.

The Board realizes that the success of its new policies will be dependent upon the officers appointed to carry out the administrative work. For too long there has been little contact with the Aboriginal population of the State, who have been left practically to their own resources and have been without guidance in their many problems. The Board will encourage all of its officers to make and maintain personal contact with Aborigines in the various places. (Annual Report, 1958, p.10.)

They recognized that it was likely that welfare officers would be needed in greater numbers, each officer to have charge of a district, dealing with the various problems on the spot as they arose. They had not yet focussed clearly on the size and complexity of the situation. The precise nature of their anticipated interventive strategies and thinking is unclear; I suspect it was unclear to them also. Considering the comments made throughout the annual report, one wonders how they envisaged actually engaging with these problem situations. Other resources, access to power, ideas, information and money were in short supply.
Settlements
The report proceeds to establish that as a basis for future policy, Lake Tyers Aboriginal station will be retained for the benefit of Aborigines. They state that:

In order that they and their families may be assimilated into the general community, it will be the aim of the Board to encourage and assist those able-bodied residents who are capable of work and becoming self-supporting to leave the station when alternative accommodation in country towns is available. To do this houses will be provided in towns where reasonable opportunities of employment are offering. Families will be carefully selected for rehousing in accordance with their ability to make the best of these opportunities. (Annual Report, 1958, p.11.)

They saw the station as becoming a settlement for the care of aged and infirm Aborigines. They did not indicate how they were intending to adjust their interventive strategies or tactics to meet this requirement but merely expressed it as one of the aspirations they held for the future of the station. Interestingly, they conclude their remarks about Lake Tyers with the statement: ‘The system of handing out food and clothing rations will be reviewed.’ (p.11).

The Board’s statements about Framlingham carried a similar ring of easy optimism:

Over the years the Framlingham Reserve Welfare Committee of Warrnambool has carried out much good work on the reserve by helping the residents to improve their standards of living, and the position has now been reached where several of the families would be suitable to be housed in towns under assimilated conditions. (Annual Report, 1958, p.12).

However, it was not until 9-10 years later, after an extraordinary amount of further work had been done with families on the settlement, that the families themselves were to express the reality of their readiness to leave the reserve by making the necessary arrangements to do so. It is significant that much of the comment in this first report of the Board is based on the data from the McLean report, supported and expanded by some other observations made by the Board members and staff in their travels around Victoria.

The Board makes an important policy and planning statement in the final paragraph of its first report: ‘Our task is not so much dealing with the welfare of Victorian Aborigines as dealing with the welfare interests of 1,400 individual persons of Aboriginal descent.’ (p.12)

There are two distinct points to make in view of future interventive action. First, the Board worked on the assumption that they were concerned with an Aboriginal population of 1,400 persons, which is about one-fifth of the actual size of the population and, secondly, they thought interventively about handling 1,400 single individuals while they talked about the community nature of the problem. And, they employed two people to travel around the state to do all that was considered necessary.
The Aborigines Welfare Board sought initially the individual salvation of the state's 1,400 Aborigines as its manifest objective. But, it provided only a couple of peripatetic welfare staff to do the job. It spent most of its money on housing and on Lake Tyers, so the extant objectives would appear to have been public appeasement and improvement of the physical circumstances of Aborigines. Already there were beginning to be assumed goals for staff which were different from the Board's. Still, no one knew what the Aborigines goals for the government were.

The assessment of needs was undergoing change; the focus was on physical and concrete matters. Housing and physical conditions were seen to be the structural determinants of the present reality in 1959. Under the rather paternal guidance of the Board, Aborigines were beginning to express needs for better housing and other material aid and were helping welfare staff fill in application forms for them. It is assumed, therefore, that there was a felt need for these things. Comparatively almost the total Aboriginal community remained deprived on every major indicator: health, housing, education, employment, income, social status, access to power. The dilemmas between values held by the Board, welfare staff, administrative staff, voluntary organizations and Aborigines had just begun to emerge.

The Board acted from necessity; there was strong political and community pressure for it to do so. It was expected to have answers to questions not yet clearly formulated, based as they were on grossly inadequate data. It did not have adequate resources even had the population been only 1,400 individuals, and it did not have access to tested interventive strategies, either at the policy development level or at the practice implementation level.

THE ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD IN OPERATION

To have some notion of the circumstances of families who had prolonged contact with the Aborigines Welfare Board and of the nature of the Board's staff contact with Aborigines, I have pieced together two case illustrations representing 'typical' situations. One is a Lake Tyers family (known for thirty years to the department) whose case record begins in 1938; the second is a widow whose initial contact was with the Aborigines Welfare Board on the riverbank at Mooroopna. Neither of these case illustrations are individual families; in fact, they are carefully compiled composites, in each case, of circumstances drawn from five and six different families, the eleven case records have been sufficiently scrambled and locations sufficiently changed to make them now unrecognizable even to the families concerned. I had numerous contacts with seven of the families, but have added very little extra information to that recorded in the voluminous files. I met on a few occasions members of the other four families.

This perspective is extended by a descriptive outline of the typical work pattern of a welfare officer employed by the Aborigines Welfare Board 1965-67, based on the author's experiences and knowledge of the activities of other officers. Finally, using the case records and interviews with staff a further perspective in the operating process of the Aborigines Welfare Board is described. The total is intended to put flesh and blood
67 on the more impersonal examination of the official record.

The Story of Two Families
The First Family:
Age 14 in 1938, Jim had a serious case of appendicitis and the manager of the Lake Tyers station wrote to the Board for the Protection of Aborigines informing them that he had obtained the services of a Dr. Gail to attend Jim and was ordering his immediate removal to hospital. The next file record is when Jim seeks a work permit to come to Melbourne in 1944 to work in a tannery. In 1947 he returned, but the Board took out a removal order against him as a half-caste capable of looking after himself. He was supposed to be violent and uncontrollable, rather irresponsible toward his wife and family which consisted of one child and another on the way. About twice a year a note is added to the file. He comes and goes from Lake Tyers for periods of months or even years at a time, but each time returns. Occasionally he causes trouble, sometimes the manager sees him as failing to support his family as he ought. He does some occasional picking and seasonal work in the district and follows a boxing and wrestling group around the country, is runner-up in one or two local competitions and plays some local football. He spends periods in the lock-up and he lives the typical itinerant life of many of his friends and family. When in difficulty, he frequently 'lands-in' on someone whom he has helped previously, or on a relative. His wife, Jenny whose family came a generation earlier from Robinvale when the Aborigines Protection Board 'rounded up' families throughout the state and brought them to Gippsland, alternates between wanting to move away from Lake Tyers towards the Murray where her family live and returning to Lake Tyers where her friends and supports remain.

By 1957 he and his wife and six children are living in West Gippsland, two of their children are wards of state and family difficulties between husband and wife continue to create accommodation and other problems which result in Jenny and the children seeking the new Board's permission to return to the station until Jim contacts them again. Several contacts occur between the welfare staff and the Children's Welfare Department, and finally the children are returned to their parents who are by then settled on Lake Tyers. The typical file comments made on the family relate to their difficulties in coping away from Lake Tyers.

In 1961 the first nursing sister appointed to travel the state makes contact with the family and a number of matters to do with the health of their children come to light, necessitating trips to the dental hospital and the deaf school and numerous other specialists; these continue until the end of 1967. By 1963 they are one of the families to be rehoused away from Lake Tyers. They move to a house in a country town where there are only two other Aboriginal families some distance away and whom they do not know. They are not prepared for the move, but are provided with considerable assistance during the year from people in the town who wish to help. The file shows that the Welfare Officer calls on them approximately each third or fourth month; he stays for anything up to three hours in the town, seeing some of the people who help, then moves on. Within a year the family are in various sorts of debt, have some difficulties with the behaviour of their children and the house rent is some months in arrears. Jim is out of
work several times before he finally manages to obtain an invalid pension. During the period, damage to the house is in the order of $1,500 in broken windows, doors, walls, smoke damage from the room heater. The lino has been damaged or lifted from more than half the house.

Relationships with local people are severely strained and finally local help falls to only essential minimal contact with the family.

Two of the children again become wards of state, debts for taxi fares to Lake Tyers and to families known to them hundreds of miles away are in excess of $100 and the family finally breaks up. By the time the family moves from the house there are only mother and two of the children together. The other children are in the care of white contacts in Melbourne who offered holidays and then offered to keep the children and provide for their education. One or two are with relatives in other parts of the state. Four years after taking up residence they have departed, leaving a house requiring more than $2,500 worth of repairs to make it habitable again. The town in which they stayed now have strong negative feelings about Aborigines. Information from the file, local newspaper cuttings and meeting notes with the local service club clearly indicate these were not part of their previous attitude. Within another year the remnants of the family have found their way back to their father at Lake Tyers. During the period the family were resident in the town the welfare staff spent a great deal of the time of contact with local magistrates, shopkeepers, welfare personnel and clerical people trying to build up a strong enough supportive network to maintain the family in their strange and new environment. The family left the town owing many hundreds of dollars which were ultimately written off by the various private, government and semi-government instrumentalities to whom it was owed. Eighteen months later the family, having regrouped on Lake Tyers, are offered another house in Gippsland near other families and they make a further attempt to settle. On this occasion they were rehoused in a town where there was a resident welfare officer, and under his constant supervision they survived for two years before the pressures of work, debts, illness and neighbours as well as the constant visits of relatives forced them to leave. Shortly after they returned to Lake Tyers the second time, Jim was killed in a motor accident and Jenny settled down with her three remaining children, later to establish another family.

The Second Family:
Born right on the turn of the century, Mrs. Deen had spent several years on Cumeroogunga and had been educated there; she had then moved with her family into the Goulburn Valley and married. She raised eight live children and when she settled on the river bank at Mooroopna she already had nine grandchildren. She was one of those dignified and reliable members of the Aboriginal community who are respectfully referred to as ‘battlers’. She had been married to an Aboriginal man from Framlingham and he had died in his early fifties in Warrnambool. Her humpy was one of the more tidy and clean on the riverbank, and when the Aborigines Welfare Board was established and built the Rumbalara settlement she obtained one of the first houses. She was at the time caring for several grandchildren and fighting the Children's Welfare Department to get two or three of the others from them into her care. She was in fact better educated than most of her own children and was capable of mixing with Europeans with no feeling of inferiority whatsoever.
Mrs. Deen periodically got homesick for the western district and then she would simply pack her things and, taking what children she had with her, would move to stay with one of her many relatives. They were inevitably willing to have her and she always did more than her share of the household chores. She had learned to live off her pension. She had established a relationship with the Secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, which relationship was handled through correspondence. She followed this by a relationship with the Superintendent of the Aborigines Welfare Board established through letters which she wrote extremely well and through intermittent contact with welfare staff, all of whom were impressed with her ability to cope both with her family and her environment, and with themselves. Mrs. Deen was hospitable. When a welfare officer called she chatted amiably and passed on bundles of family gossip. She had them well trained; she knew what information about other Aborigines was at a premium and she had a large family and was always happy to chat about friends and relatives. Consequently, when she wanted to move from Rumbalara to stay with relatives for an extended holiday there was no difficulty in retaining the unit. She went to Colac and to Terang and Warmambool, looking after one or two children each time, and finally after 6-8 weeks she returned to Rumbalara. She was unhappy at the separation from her family and had numerous discussions with the welfare officer when he called. She also had numerous discussions with local charitable people who were prepared to assist her in small ways without requiring her to forgo her independence. The welfare staff finally persuaded her that she should try a new home in Terang close to relatives. Finally she did. However, when she moved in 1961 she was not in the best of health and periodically had to visit a doctor in Melbourne. She remained in contact with the Board's officers. One grandson and granddaughter had trouble with the police and finally both were committed to the Social Welfare Department. Periodically her rent fell in arrears when she went to look after the children of a daughter who was having another baby, or the children of a son who wanted to go off to a job picking with his wife and did not want to be burdened with the children. She lived in their house and argued that she ought not to have to pay rent for her own place. She actually once succeeded in having her rent remitted, but on the other occasions she finally had to pay and with the help of her children she managed eventually to get her rent up to date.

On several occasions the welfare officer exerted pressure on her to clean up the garden and surrounds of the house and eventually she did so. She continued through 1962-3 to have difficulties with a retarded daughter and two rather wayward sons. She was looking after the two youngsters and her daughter and two grandchildren when she requested that the Board transfer her back to Mooroopna or Shepparton. She was homesick, she said, and she was having difficulty with some of the local employers in getting work for her boys and thus keeping them home and bringing in income. Also she was having difficulty obtaining education for her daughter. Things settled down during 1965; she requested blinds for the wide windows and got them. She had some problems with neighbours' children during this year and occasional financial difficulties. In the end she married off her two boys and persuaded the Board to transfer her to a new home in Shepparton in 1967. She constantly sought and obtained help from local health centre sisters in bringing up her grandchildren. She was periodically threatened by letters from the Board about excessive numbers of visitors, but inevitably these could be identified as
relatives or genuine visitors and the Board desisted from pursuing the matter.

In all, she used the Aborigines Welfare Board and its staff as an extension of her family and friends and as an extra resource. She succeeded in extending her relationships so that she had a wide and effective resource network available to assist in time of trouble. She was a competent household manager, several members of staff had shared coffee and biscuits with her and she was a pillar of strength to her children. Her letters and her routine visits from the welfare staff were welcomed. Virtually never were staff required to contact other community resources to deal with her crises.

These two potted composites provide some sketch of the sort of situations Aborigines presented to the eye of the Aborigines Welfare Board staff as it recorded them in its case files. They represent fragmented and partial insights into the nature of the coping processes of two typical families who grew up in the era of the Protection Boards, experienced the Welfare Board and then later the Ministry. The significant thing about these histories which have been faithfully culled from the eleven case records is the focus. There is so little known about the personal aspirations, the genuine inner life, fears and beliefs, except what is inferred or implied. Yet they reflect in a significant and meaningful way, the nature of contact between government officers and Aborigines over those periods of time. In fact, many contacts were deeper and more personal than these. The case records, however, have never been seen by the families and have only been compiled by field staff and reflect the limitations of this method of recording. But, it is quite legitimate to ask whether this depth of recording is not in fact sufficient for the purpose of implementing the programmes of government. They do reflect a reality; that no one believed that the desired changes would occur through the use of a casework approach. The records merely record the general functioning status of families subject to structural change programmes. What these illustrations show is the intention of the government not so much to change the families by its welfare staff contact, but to sustain them if the family had the skills to use the staff. The change activities were bound in the structural programmes, involving significant expenditure of funds and changing the opportunity structures of families.

The Welfare Officer at Work

The Board issued instructions to its Superintendent of Aboriginal Welfare who had at his disposal administrative and field staff. Amongst the field staff not placed permanently at Lake Tyers were included two nurses, a property officer and 3-5 welfare officers; normally, one or two of whom were social workers. It is the activities of this latter category of field staff which the following discusses.

Briefly, what was the typical activity programme of a Welfare Officer during the decade of the Aborigines Welfare Board? He was responsible for one of five districts, covering at least a fifth of the state. He spent one week or sometimes two away in the district, then the next one or two in the city. He expected to travel between 400 and 700 miles during the week or fortnight and in each week he would plan to visit between 20 and 40 families. These visits might last from five minutes to two hours. The mean times for three welfare officers in 1965 was 45 minutes for families with whom they had developed
working relationships and otherwise 20 minutes, the modal times were lower. While visiting a town a welfare officer could also expect to spend two hours meeting with and talking to people: members of service organizations helping Aboriginal families in the town, government officers stationed there, e.g. from Commonwealth Employment Services, Social Welfare Department, Commonwealth Social Security Department; an employer, a councillor, a health centre nurse, an SCF (Save The Children Fund) worker or a school teacher. The welfare officer was rather like a mobile first aid welfare unit. His car or station wagon might contain blankets, which he might give away or sell for 10/- ($1.00), he might have some furniture or cleaning gear for a family moving into a new home; forms for almost every conceivable type of benefit or pension, a rail voucher book for people needing to travel to Melbourne for dental appointments or the like, and the inevitable order book which he could use for emergency aid which might typically be a $10 grocery order on a local store. He inevitably carried application forms for the Housing Commission of Victoria and these were used to encourage people to apply for rental houses from the Housing Commission or the Aborigines Welfare Board, the same form being used for both.

He was frequently involved in arrangements with parents regarding transport of their children to a holiday placement during school vacation; these arrangements were with the Aborigines Advancement League or some similar organization. He would be required to see a European applicant wishing to adopt an Aboriginal child and undertake an assessment interview. Some visits involved applicants for Aborigines Welfare Board or Housing Commission homes. As time progressed through the 1960’s and the Aborigines Welfare Board owned more and more houses he would frequently return to the office in Melbourne with an extensive list of requests for repairs or renovations to houses. These might include smoking heaters, stoves not working properly, drains not working, broken doors or windows, lino lifting from the floor, coppers or washing machines playing up. Later, as people came to feel that the design of their homes left a great deal to be desired, as their comparison levels rose, he would return with requests for renovations to modernise the house and increase privacy. Frequently he was required to collect the rent and discuss both rental problems and loan repayments that were in arrears. Occasionally he would be required to appear in court on behalf of some Aboriginal person as a character witness, or appear for a child. He was required to be a versatile, all-round, welfare worker.

The Board employed a number of rent collectors and if one of these was in the area through which the welfare officer’s ‘run’ took him, he inevitably spent some hours with the rent collector discussing the situation and sometimes sorting out difficulties. If there was a Save the Children Fund centre in his area the same would occur there. The following week would then be spent in the office in Melbourne dealing with the myriad of tasks collected during the preceding week. There were twenty or thirty case records to write up, so they were not likely to be extensive; there were numerous letters to be written, appointments to medical, dental and optical specialists to make; reports on housing applicants to be prepared and despatched; reports on applicants for adoption, on the specific activities of the week, and on the trip to be prepared. There was the usual round...
of discussions with the Superintendent and other staff about people and places, the cross-feeding of data about population and people. The car had to be serviced, rent returns completed, trip expenses claimed, discussions with the property officer, who had been appointed in 1965, about properties with problems and people with property problems. Property maintenance was an ever-present headache to everyone from the tenant to the Chairman of the Board. When there was time monthly meetings of welfare staff were called; these were rare. They would try to come to some sort of understanding of what the hectic dashing about the countryside was really achieving. These sessions were important, difficult and, more often than not, frustrating. The problems on one level were purely practical; it was difficult to reconcile the role of rent collector with that of welfare officer; there were constant discussions about the handling of people who borrowed money and did not repay; about people who did not pay their rent and other debts to the Board and what the welfare officer was supposed to do about it, pushing for the payment on one hand, trying to help stretch limited budgets under trying circumstances on the other. During the decade these problems were never solved. Then there were other difficulties, the very structure of the department created real problems. For policy, the staff received statements from the monthly Board meetings through the Superintendent; however, staff never attended these meetings. For professional consulting they talked with the Superintendent. For administrative assistance they needed to go through the secretary to the Board and the Department. Frequently administrative and professional attitudes to problems affecting Aborigines were not in accord. For finance it was necessary to go through the Chief Secretary's Department because all the finances and the budget were handled through that department and not through the Board or its administrative staff.

There were thus numerous points in the organization through which differences of opinion could find expression and there was considerable difficulty in resolving these. It was not uncommon for a member of the Board, which had executive authority, to himself become involved in the activities of the department and even deal with individual Aborigines who were not happy with the manner in which a staff member was handling their particular difficulty. Thus the week in Melbourne was often used to sort out some of the difficulties that arose through this channel.

Overall, the Melbourne week was a very busy and difficult one spent on the telephone, writing and in discussion. The situation changed for a number of obvious reasons as more officers were appointed in the latter half of the 1960's. They lived in country areas, worked from regional offices and handled problems and situations from these offices rather than from Melbourne. The difficulties these officers had in maintaining clear communications and workable administrative procedures was considerable.

The Welfare Board Story from Case Records and Staff
I read more than 1000 case records on individuals and families known to the Aborigines Welfare Board. No attempt at statistical, or quasi-statistical analysis has been made. In lieu of a content analysis a number of strong impressions were checked out through interviews with 13 welfare and field staff. (This included most of those people employed by the Board during its existence.)
The departmental concerns shifted from time to time in response to pressure, this is visible in the records. Different members of staff had their own orientation and the records show these coming through, even over the political concerns of the moment. The case files are a peculiarly sensitive indicator of attitudes, both of the staff and the department and could be subjected to formal content analysis. There were periods when the focus was on health, at other times it would be on drinking, child care, housing, etc.

The majority of case records were brief. There were very few diagnostic/therapeutic records on file. Records were primarily in the form of diaries of contact with information about the families, about specific problems, judgments about the physical circumstances of the family, their environment, employment, the progress of a child at school, medical arrangements that needed to be made, or just gossip picked up from discussion. The data recorded reflects the overall generality of the focus of the staff contacts with Aborigines. From time to time there appear records which reflect effective family casework being undertaken and frequently sound professional help was given to individuals or families, but mainly the nature of activity was supportive contact and environmental manipulation administered by untrained staff. Because of the constant need for information about the population there is much information on the case records about births and deaths, about who were relatives and where they lived and who were their children, siblings, parents and so forth. Most welfare officers could provide a reasonable genealogy of most of the families in their areas. There is also considerable recording of where people had moved to and 'where so-and-so was now' and had been last week or last month.

The visits were in the nature of friendly contacts, usually a bit unequal because the welfare officer had so many 'goodies' to offer. However, they were conducted on a friendly, helpful note, sometimes outside dwellings, sometimes at the front door and sometimes inside the homes. Not infrequently a family was not anxious to have a welfare officer inside because they felt that judgment would be made about the house or the way they lived, or because they had 'illegal' tenants in the house. All in all it was a thin contact and support service.

The Welfare Officer was one of the resources the Aborigines Welfare Board used to implement its policies. It was not sufficient to merely provide structural programmes; house building, education bursaries, hospital and dental appointments and the like. The welfare staff provided an element of personal contact; they acted to implement the assimilation policy goals of the Board. They established relationships with the Aboriginal community and with the various social institutions and using the material resources and their personal skills built some kind of a bridge spanning these two cultures. However, in the process they, like their predecessors, came to form opinions about what ought to be done for Aborigines; about what the Board's policies ought to be. Yet they had no access to the policy-makers and very little direct effective communication with them. They were the data collectors, but their data depended on their perceptions and their orientation and few of them were professionally trained and they were often frustrated. They frequently felt isolated and, like the Aborigines, subject to the whims of others about them.
ABORIGINAL WELFARE BOARD GENERAL POLICY 1958-1967

Before proceeding on to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and to the census date, it is important to obtain some further picture of the Aborigines Welfare Board and its self-image, its activities in the fields which represent the majority of its activities. First general policy over the ten years, then Housing, Education and Health. For it is in these specific areas that the major dilemmas are most clearly observed.

A Dramatic Change in Policy

Policy in 1958-9, the Board's first operational year, has been outlined, in the report of June 1960 no specific heading 'Policy' appears and the conclusion to that report states:

One of the most important lessons learned during the year was that the question of Aboriginal Welfare is a complex one. It is not merely a question of building sufficient houses, or of appointing more welfare officers, or of spending money on other welfare projects; various aspects of the Aboriginal welfare programme are all interrelated - for instance, the solution of the housing problem involves the question of continuous employment, and the solution of the employment problem involves education and training, and in its turn the question of education is related to living standards. (Annual Report, 1960, p. 1.)

This is an expression of the problem in systems terms. An awareness at the most fundamental level that one thing affects another. In 1960-61 the Policy statement made it clear that Aborigines in Victoria, unlike most other states, had full citizen rights. This report for the first time makes the statement that: 'There is nothing of their tribal way of life left and their conditions are similar to those depressed sections of the white community.' (Annual Report, 1960, p. 4.).

The report also noted that Aborigines in Victoria were similar to those in south eastern and western Australia but quite dissimilar and had little in common to Aborigines in the central and northern areas of the continent. The dilemma of the assimilation policy is apparent in the Board's policy statement:

The Aborigines Welfare Board has a duty laid down by statute to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of the Aborigines with a view to their assimilation into the general community. The term 'assimilation' is used in the sense of encouraging and assisting people of Aboriginal descent to become responsible members of the local community, having no disadvantages or discriminating modifications of citizenship because of race. Australians look for a homogeneous society and just as there is an assimilation policy for New Australians, so the Board aims at a policy of assimilation for the Aboriginal Australians. The assimilation policy is a process of gradual social change with the objective of achieving the complete social acceptance of Aborigines by other Australians and the whole-hearted adoption by the Aborigines of the so-called Australian way of life. (Annual Report, 1960, p. 4.)

For the year ended 1961 there are no specific statements of policy. There appears to have been no report issued for the year ended 30th June, 1962.
In 1963 the focus on housing was intense but no commentary on policy appeared. There were too few staff during these years and too many difficulties to encourage speculation of a philosophical kind about desirable policies, so there existed a gap between general objectives and specific programmes and resources. The June 1964 report had some significant statements to make. During the year the bi-annual conference of Ministers responsible for Aboriginal affairs in the various states and the Commonwealth met in Darwin in July, 1963. Some important issues were discussed and by implication these were supported by Victoria; they are reproduced in full in the Aborigines Welfare Board annual report. They include decisions to continue meeting bi-annually and to raise the question of Commonwealth government financial support for Aboriginal affairs through the Premiers' Conference. Interestingly, this is one of the first clear expressions of the recognition of inadequate resources for the task, as yet not adequately documented nor accepted.

There was the first official recognition of the need to disseminate information on the progress being made in the advancement towards assimilation of the Aborigines. They expressed interest in combating misrepresentations of the Board's achievements and all the recommendations were directed towards that end. There is no expression of concern at their lack of knowledge on which to plan. There was general agreement about use of the terms 'Aborigines' and 'Aboriginal' as nouns and part-Aboriginal and Aboriginal as adjectives. It is worth noting that this usage, separating Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal reflects a perception of the situation which Aborigines (i.e. part-Aborigines) today would deny and find quite unacceptable. They sought to maintain the right of an Aborigine to carry across state boundaries the rights and status held in his home state (these varied considerably). Nothing came of this for many years, but the issue was important. They sought (which seems rather odd only in retrospect) to have voluntary organizations work to advance government policies of assimilation; they wanted voluntary organizations to handle educational scholarships, welfare services, holiday camps and community acceptance of Aborigines. A much criticised resolution was passed to the effect that if Aboriginal children were taken into another state (usually by Europeans) they would inform the receiving state department so that if the arrangements broke down assistance would be immediately available if it was needed. 1964 was a most important year for the Aborigines Welfare Board; it had two welfare officers, one in East Gippsland and Phillip J. Boas who joined a month or so before the first property officer was appointed.

1965 was a notable year; there was a scampering for cover. Aboriginal problems were seen not only as difficult to resolve but political dynamite. New legislation was speedily enacted. The Minister ceased to chair the Board; instead a chairman was appointed by the Governor-in-Council. Administration was shifted from the Chief Secretary's department to the Minister for Housing. However, the staff of the Board remained under the Chief Secretary's department, which manouvre effectively confused this researcher as much as it created problems for the by now diversely supervised staff. The Under-Secretary no longer sat on the Board; the Chief Secretary nominated and the Governor-in-Council appointed a representative of the Social Welfare Branch of the Chief Secretary's department.
In 1965 the key change to occur was the official recognition of the most influential Aboriginal voluntary organization — the Aborigines Advancement League. It gained the right to nominate three persons, one of whom was appointed by the Governor-in-Council to sit on the Board. Dr. Colin Tatz was appointed and he was the man who set in motion the political changes which resulted in the creation of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs three years later. A new set of values created some new dilemmas. Board members were paid for attending meetings. This was possible now that there were no longer any members of Parliament on the Board.

The report for the year 30th June 1966 contained detailed new policy statements drawn up by a sub-committee of three members and the superintendent. The April-June edition of Smoke Signals (1966, p.11.), the official publication of the Aborigines Advancement League, indicated that the policy document was largely the work of Dr. Tatz, one of the three members of the committee, the other two being Mr. Albert G. Booth, who in 1972 was the Director-General of the Ministry of Social Welfare, and Mr. Arthur G. Holden, previous national president of Apex and the man largely responsible for the Apex White Paper ten years earlier. This sub-committee established policy for future operations, defined its terms carefully, then outlined the principles and methods which they felt ought to be employed in the implementation of that policy. The document outlining the policy is thorough indeed and offers sharply focussed principles and recommendations. The most significant points of general principle and broad policy are summarised.

What caused the policy debate? For some two years the Board had been employing professional social workers and their increasing dissatisfaction with the policy and administration led them finally to a mass resignation. The Aborigines Advancement League representative was exerting strong pressure for change. The dilemmas resulted in compromises that did not create workable programmes. The Board had to defend its previous stand on policy and the lack of Board flexibility in addition to a lack of leadership in the department led to strong criticism from the press. There was political agitation, dissension among the Board members themselves and dissatisfaction within the staff. There were also growing demands for change from the now more vocal Aboriginal community and these were supported by the press. This combination of circumstances laid open the path for changes in administrative philosophy and strategy. On top of this and not surprisingly, the Board's programmes during the seven years had failed to resolve many of the problems. There was an increasing pressure for change and a growing feeling in the community that more now needed to be done. Board leadership and generally acceptable objectives, were both missing. There lacked also an awareness that 'things get worse as they get better', i.e. as Aboriginal people 'advance' they will naturally become more vocal and demand more power, and without farsighted policy planning backed by competent practice there was bound to be trouble. This of course is the message of the Dawson studies on comparison levels that administrators constantly fail to recognize and fail to respond appropriately toward.
A Re-Statement of Policy, 1966
The policy document outlined four fundamental areas necessary for the successful implementation of the change programme.

It defined policy as ‘a broad set of aims, attitudes and objectives and a statement of hopes and aspirations.’ It stated that policy must contain sub-policies consistent with the broader policy as a whole; that there need be target dates fixed to prevent inertia; that constant review of policy and practice was vital.

Secondly, it observed that there must be no gap between policy decisions and administrative decisions; that without staff involvement and feedback the gap between objectives and results desired widens.

Thirdly, it made a statement that never previously appeared in government documents in Victoria about Aborigines, that ‘the Board, the staff and the clients; “the Aborigines”, must be all three, party to and co-operative in the policy’, and required counselling and persuasion to be the primary techniques. Finally, it pointed out that there were at least five distinct regional groupings of Aborigines and thus a necessity for flexible policy, not one overall formula.

The document next outlined the Board Policy and in so doing used a very impressive array of emotive sophistry that has about it the touch of a United Nations Declaration, and the inherent weakness that such statements carry no basis for translating policies into active intervention programmes. The difficulties implicit in the argument, were in fact never resolved by the Board and neither did the Ministry later fully resolve them, although the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs position minimised their effect to some extent. The difficulties: (1) involve the client in planning but not in setting the objectives; these were defined by the goals of assimilation; (2) interpret assimilation in the new way (see below), but the new way only changed the words from prescriptives with their implication of rightness to commending words with their implication of choice; semantically nice but in fact, of course, the Victorian legislation never gave the Victorian government department any real authority. If the change in meaning were to be interpreted and implemented as a policy change it was essential that it be through the exertion of less influence on any action where Aboriginal decision-making was involved.

The document restates the Board’s statutory obligation to ‘promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of Aborigines with a view to their assimilation into the general community’. The 1951 definition was changed Australia-wide at the 1965 bi-annual conference in Adelaide.

1951-1961 The policy of assimilation AIMS TO ENSURE THAT all Aborigines and part-Aborigines . . .
1965 The policy of assimilation SEEKS THAT all persons of Aboriginal . . .
1951/1961 WILL ATTAIN the same manner of living as other . . .
This national redefinition can also be seen as a compromise, an incremental change of policy, resulting from the recognition of new dilemmas. During the four years there had been changes of values in “good currency” and the resolution of some of the previous dilemmas.

The significant aspect of this definitional change was, its implication that Aborigines should be involved in decision-making. In fact, the next seven years were to be devoted to attempts which appeared to give Aborigines this choice, whilst, in fact, recognizing that there was no way the authorities could find of offering choice without losing control of the machinery of policy and implementation. This meant that Aborigines could be offered only limited choice because they might decide not to choose the present administration and that was not one of the things they were free to choose. These values and this dilemma were more significant during the period of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs administration, as will be seen later.

So, in the document, the Board resolved the problem by stating that this change really meant that policy-makers should understand Aboriginal choice and that full explanations must be given and alternatives presented so that meaningful choices could be made.

It also meant that Aboriginal cultural values, customs, beliefs, and manner and place of living were to be given full recognition. The document then states that from these principles emerged the essence of Board policy, ‘equality of opportunity’ (later to be the cornerstone of Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs policy), including obligations and responsibility. This was cautiously modified by the principle that it was as unjust to treat unequals equally as it was to treat equals unequally.

To overcome the inferences of this statement the Board affirmed that when it treated Aboriginal people differently it would do so not on the grounds of race but ‘of difference in needs, capacities, interests, incentives and the weight of responsibility that can be borne.’

The document went on to state the minimum rights and duties:
1. Protection before, and obedience to, the law.
2. Expression and self-development.
3. Movement association and domicile.
5. Right to work and choose employment.
6. Involvement in political institutions and assembly.
7. Enjoyment of special services, e.g. Social Service Benefits.

The document adds five more compensatory extra rights, then makes two more broad statements:
(a) The Board’s first task is to adopt these minimum and differential rights and standards and to encourage and persuade Aborigines to accept them and their accompanying duties. In the initial stages, however, there will be a considerable number who will not be able to accept or cope with these rights and duties. The policy of the Board is not to abandon these people as hopeless but to engage in rehabilitative work in suitable areas and institutions.

With increased efficiency, in persuading Aborigines to accept and adopt their rights and obligations, the number in this category should reduce considerably. (Annual Report, 1967, Appendix 1, p.13.)

(b) The Board again states the principle that it never was able to implement, i.e. community participation: ‘... Recognizes that the equalizing of Aborigines in all respects is not a one-way but a two-way process between Aborigines and the white community.’ (p.14.)

It is significant to read the comments on policy in the final report of the Aborigines Welfare Board in June 1967. After stating that the new policy had been printed and circulated it states:

By themselves, the statements on policy will not achieve answers to the many and varied problems facing the Board in its duty of promoting the welfare of Victoria’s Aboriginal people. Progress towards solutions will involve the maximum of cooperation between Government and voluntary bodies and between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. Much detailed work is necessary, but already considerable progress has been made towards the implementation of these policies, and a special Board sub-committee consisting of three Board members and two staff members has been created to plan the implementation of policies. (Annual Report, 1967, p.5.)

By this stage it had become clear that the structure of the Board and the existing arrangements were incapable of activating a sufficiently innovatory programme to cope with the new policy statement and the Board was disbanded as an appropriate political machine for Aboriginal affairs administration. It is salutary to note that the Board did in fact develop the mechanism which led to the need for its own termination and reconstitution.

The general policy of the Board 1958-1967 underwent considerable modification. The extent of the change is seen in its ultimate statement of a policy it was not able to implement. The years between 1958 and 1968 were years of change in the perception of appropriate policies to apply to Aborigines nationally and locally. In
Victoria the involvement of Aborigines began. The recognition of their right to
certain forms of compensation for past deprivation was accepted to a limited extent.
A rising comparison level began to take its toll on the easy implementation of paternal
policies. Felt and expressed needs by Aborigines began to receive consideration by
government. Comparative deprivation received consideration in policy decisions and
normative concepts of need underwent modification. The objectives of the government
assumed by staff, welfare officers, Aboriginal organizations and Aborigines began to
influence the expression of manifest and extant objectives, and increasing information
about the Victorian situation began to clarify the direction in which requisite goals
would be stated in the future. The time-space perspective changed a little, and the
recognition that it needed to move outward was expressed. Some of the dilemmas of
the past were resolved and new ones, more realistically grounded, took their place,
for example, how to implement normative objectives with justice and humanity. The
first serious gesture to growing Aboriginal participation, in power, was made. It was a
meaningful period of learning and development for the state and significant changes
in social policy occurred. The stage was set for new intervention programmes; for
organizational, administrative and philosophic development and innovation. Before
proceeding, however, a review of some specific aspects of health, education and
housing policy and practice will fill out the skeleton of policy as it has been outlined.

ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMES
1958-1967

From the beginning health was seen as an important area of concern. It was, however,
an area not publicly very obvious (it did not have a high visibility profile) and thus not
one to expend either great sums of money upon nor one on which to focus public
concern. Until 1965-66 health activities take up only a couple of brief paragraphs in
annual reports. During the whole period of the Aborigines Welfare Board there never
were more than two health staff employed by the Board, one at Lake Tyers and the
other mobile, moving around the state. During the period welfare officer activity
frequently had to do with the health of the Victorian Aboriginal people (those in
contact with the Board) and there were programmes undertaken by the Health
Department and by voluntary organizations and others. However, the total amount of
money and resources expended was less than housing or even education.

The first annual report states that Aboriginal health programmes are those of the
general community, and there are no special diseases which cause concern. It goes on:
Problems of health and hygiene are aggravated by bad living conditions. Sanitary
arrangements in camps on the outskirts of the towns are generally the most primitive
and represent a health risk. (Annual Report, 1958, p.8.)

Then:
The Board's officers will be travelling around the state and they will give attention to
health aspects, advising and instructing Aboriginal parents, and arranging medical
treatment where required. It is thought that improved housing will provide the
solution to some of these health problems. (Annual Report, 1958, p.8.)
Again in the 1960 period, apart from limited comment in a handful of case records, the activity associated with health was still quite small; not surprising when it is considered that there were only two people covering the whole of the state. The annual report states again that health and hygiene amongst Aborigines in Victoria are closely related to those of housing: ‘... Where Aborigines are living under bad housing conditions without running water and other amenities, they are unable to maintain satisfactory standards of health and cleanliness.’ (Annual Report, 1960, p.6.)

The report goes on to outline the programmes. It states that when these conditions are improved it will be possible to deal with health problems. Health of young children in East Gippsland was surveyed by the Health Department during the year and as a result they expressed a belief that many Aboriginal children received inadequate food and they believed that it was partly through poverty and apathy, and partly as a result of parental ignorance of food preparation and food values. The Board decided to try and combat these deficiencies by providing baby food and vitamin preparations to health centres and Save the Children Fund centres and to its own staff travelling around. The report goes on to say that the Board intends to focus special attention on the East Gippsland area and on women and children because the surveys show these problems to be greatest. It should, however, be noted that East Gippsland was the only area where any attempts at health surveying in even a limited form was carried out. Elsewhere health opinion was a matter of speculation and fragmented information. However, the report concludes:

The Board's welfare staff is on the alert for health problems amongst Aborigines, and frequently officers refer cases to doctors and hospitals, making arrangements for treatment where necessary. During the year assistance was given to some indigent Aborigines to obtain hearing aids and spectacles. The Board is aware of the importance of good health amongst the Aborigines and is doing all it can to ensure that no Aboriginal goes without necessary medical care. (Annual Report, 1960, p.6.)

It is important to recall that at this stage two Board officers were in contact with some small percentage of the 2,200 Aborigines known to the Board out of what was later to be established as a population of more than 6,000. The interventive actions of the Board were based on situations as they became evident and were put together hurriedly. They usually attempted to cope with one aspect of the overall problem. However, there is evidence in the reports that they were aware that in some way the problems were complexly interwoven.

In 1961 a triple-certificated nurse was appointed by the Aborigines Welfare Board to take up duties as a welfare officer stationed at Lakes Entrance. She was to concentrate on welfare duties amongst Aboriginal women and children in East Gippsland and was seen as supplementing the work of the existing health and welfare services in that area. The Board was to be very fortunate in that Sister Goldsworthy stayed until 1967. The only other visiting nurse to be appointed during the period, in 1965, was stationed at Lake Tyers. In 1961 the Board's annual report states that:

Welfare Officers in the course of regular travelling throughout the state are familiarizing Aborigines with the services of Hospital and Medical Benefit schemes, and ambulance contribution funds, and are encouraging Aborigines to become members. All Aboriginal
families at Lake Tyers belong to a Hospital Contribution Fund. (Annual Report, 1961, p.7.)

The health programme continued without any significant change for the rest of the period of the Board. The number of medical referrals increased as the number of welfare staff increased. Staff arranged for more people to become members of Benefit schemes by the simple expedient of finding someone to pay for them. They drove people to medical appointments, made appointments in Melbourne for dental and medical requirements. The Board report observed that there appeared to be no easing in the rate of referrals but believed that it was obvious that 'this formidable assault on poor health, will show its results in the near future'. (Annual Report, 1963, p.7.)

In fact there never was a let up or any apparent significant change except an increasing demand for more medical service. The Board continued to supply prophylactic aid. The Aborigines Welfare Board throughout its lifetime supplied free medical service to Aborigines on Lake Tyers. It maintained a clinic and dispensary there and for most of the first five years had a hospital there. Doctors were brought out to the settlement monthly or when needed, all treatment was free, and when the doctor was not able to come to the settlement the patient was driven by the staff into the doctor or the hospital. The Board helped Aborigines to travel to the various medical services and met the financial requirements and accommodation if this was involved. The Board often paid accounts when asked. An understanding developed that when an Aboriginal adult or child was being discharged from hospital, the Aborigines Welfare Board accepted the responsibility of notifying the family, and made arrangements to get children home. To a very considerable extent the Board clearly communicated to Aborigines that it accepted the responsibility for the health care of both adults and children. It also encouraged and assisted families to attend the immunization and other programmes available. Annual Reports, discussing morbidity, list dozens of specific medical conditions common amongst Aborigines, many commonly associated with poverty, poor standards of living and poor accommodation. The 1965 Annual Report states that country hospitals and doctors frequently do not charge Aborigines for their services because ‘They don’t pay when they are sent accounts’.

The Board seems to have been aware that government programmes were not reaching the underlying causes of ill-health and to indicate an awareness of the need for a planned programme of health improvement, a health education and training programme, and a regular home visiting service.

I examined a sample of 30 case records of families who were known to the Aboriginal Welfare Board in 1958 or 1959 and still actively known to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in 1972. During the ten years 1958-1968 there were gaps of up to two and three years when there was no contact with 13 of the families. From 1968-1972 contacts were as close during some periods as 2-3 times a month, and in others as far apart as one visit in four months. I plotted a frequency distribution of the families which showed nothing significant except when a particular welfare officer was in regular contact and when particular crises occurred that made contact by mail more frequent.
The files indicated that recording of visits was generally reliable and that the content of discussions between the welfare officer and the family changed very little over the fourteen years. The records showed that when the visiting nurse made contact with the family she recorded the nature of her health discussions and very little more unless she was involved in planning holidays for the children. There were 1,210 reports of visits or letters from the Sister to the families and only two of these did not refer to health matters. There were more than 2,000 visits or letters reported on the files from welfare officers and social workers and field officers and 473 of these mentioned health matters. Typically, the contents related to arrangements for medical or dental aid, comments about the health of the children or the parents, and frequently reports of the nutrition and food deficiencies observed or discussed. Many of the nursing sister's reports related to arrangements for immunization programmes, visits to the infant welfare centre and the like.

The final draft of the health policy document prepared by the Board in late 1966 sums up the results of the experience of the last eight years and puts together recommendations for operating from the basis of the understanding gained.

Aborigines have a right to the conditions necessary for physical and intellectual well-being and development, including the right to the best available educational and health standards. The Board has already stated the need to provide greater assistance in the use of available health facilities because of the difference in Aboriginal awareness and incentives in this connection... The Board also recognizes the direct relationship between health and education and between health and housing.

Aborigines must be encouraged and assisted to make full use of existing health facilities - State, Commonwealth, local government, voluntary and private. Health service agencies will be encouraged to pay special attention to Aboriginal health problems. Board policy lays stress on the preventive aspects of Aboriginal health.

A primary aim of the Board is the development of an effective programme of health education. Research into Aboriginal health in general, and into effective communication of health concepts in particular, is considered a vital aspect of health policy. (Annual Report, 1967, Appendix 1, p.15.)

The document also states that apart from encouraging Aboriginal wage-earners to join the hospital and medical benefit schemes the Board intended to encourage local voluntary organizations to underwrite the benefit subscriptions of needy Aborigines.

There are two important facts which, in a sense, sharpen into clear focus the nature of the activities of the Board and the sort of dilemmas that they perceived. The foremost relates to the fact that even with their awareness of the interrelated nature of health and other issues they completed ten years of administration without putting bathrooms and reticulated water to every house on Lake Tyers, and the second relates to Framlingham where they only agreed to permit the construction of separate kitchens and loungerooms and the presence of bathrooms and septic toilets and the necessary water supply to service these beginning in 1965, after tremendous resistance.
It is data of this type that leads one to speculate on the nature and depth of the Board’s understanding of the problem and on their understanding of the nature of actions that might be necessary to deal with the problems that existed.

In all, the Board did take some action to encourage Aborigines toward better health and better use of health services. It acted in a limited prophylactic manner. It recognized the concept of prevention of illness as important but found no method of trying its activities together so that they acted effectively toward this end. The geographic size of the problem, the extent of the health difficulties that existed, and the few staff available to act in any way to deal with the situation were factors that created the compromises that determined the nature of programmes. The lack of knowledge by many of the Aboriginal families with whom the Board had contact was important. The generally poor contact and relationships, and Aboriginal ignorance about the methods of obtaining service all contributed. Frequently this was interpreted by welfare staff and Board members as lack of concern. The negative attitudes of health personnel toward Aboriginal patients is entirely understandable; they did not fit the expectations of patients or clients that these services held. The physical circumstances of their lives and the limited resource base from which Aborigines operated added to the difficulty created by ignorance and lack of experience.

A number of difficulties are visible in retrospect. There was a desperate shortage of data about the extent of Aboriginal mortality and morbidity, and about the actual nutrition and food-eating habits. There was uncertainty about appropriate methods of tackling health problems on so extensive a scale, it was not a situation that had been subjected to intensive welfare activity in this environment. The preventive aspects were not clear; could a viable programme be developed that would deal with the situation, taking into account the other disabilities suffered by this community? How could adequate health services be delivered to a community whose attitudes and knowledge were geared so apparently negatively toward solving the problems?

For the Board and its staff during the decade health was, in fact, an area in which there was a constant frustration. The Board failed to clarify the confusion that was involved; there was a continuous attempt to try to do something about health, to at least ameliorate the most obvious deficiencies, to begin in some manner to develop some preventive aspects, including research, which it commissioned in 1966 with the Monash Centre for Research into Aboriginal Affairs. However, with neither data nor a developmental frame of reference, and lacking a clear and specific statement of the health ‘problem’, and lacking any sound frame of reference, the Aborigines Welfare Board floundered out of its depth up to the end.

To Sum up Health 1958-1967
Data remained severely limited, staff inadequate to either collate the data collected or undertake any other comprehensive role. Concepts of health education were developed during the period but lacked back-up service — delivery skills or technology. Lip service was paid to some excellent objectives, but without a clear policy in which to fit them they remained ideas only. There continued, in fact, to be a massive needs/resources gap and no concepts to help bridge it. Normative and comparative needs were believed to be considerable but it remained for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to establish
programmes which would make these visible.

ABORIGINAL WELFARE BOARD EDUCATION POLICY
AND PROGRAMMES 1958-1967

The educational programmes of the Board reflect the same compromises and dilemmas as do those of health and housing, as we will see shortly. The following table (1) will enable the reader to note the nature of the data available to the Aborigines Welfare Board for educational planning. The table also suggests, however, the emphasis on secondary education and the lack of appreciation of the problem situation in Primary and Pre-School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students total estimated by or known to A.W.B.</th>
<th>Secondary Students known to A.W.B.</th>
<th>Primary Students known to A.W.B.</th>
<th>Preschool Students known to A.W.B.</th>
<th>Financial Assistance offered to Aboriginal parents with pupil in Secondary School (by A.W.B.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>500 (est.)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>70 @ $60 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>113 @ $60 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>154 @ $60 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>750 (known)</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>NK</td>
<td>204 @ $85 each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1: Summary of Educational Statistics Available 1961-1967

Showing numbers of Aboriginal children at school from 1961 to 1967 and the available data on pre-school, primary, secondary and financial assistance available through the Aborigines Welfare Board.

In its earliest report in 1958 the Aborigines Welfare Board observes that:

The same educational opportunities are available to Aboriginal children as to white children in this state, but unfortunately as a result of environmental conditions Aborigines have not taken full advantage of these facilities. They have been accepted into the schools of the Victorian State Education System.

... The Board wishes to stress that Aboriginal children have equivalent intellectual capacity with white children, and refutes a fairly widespread belief that Aboriginal children cannot progress beyond the 4th grade, because cases are known where they are progressing well at a higher level. (Annual Report, 1958, p.8.)

The report then proceeds to outline the reasons for educational retardation. It includes in this outline the problem of attendance which is not regular because parents are unable to see the importance of regular attendance and do not insist upon it. In failing
to notify attendance officers teachers, too, contributed to irregular attendance
at school. There is also the problem that arises in broken schooling because parents
move from one area to another. The Board recognized that home conditions were
often unfavourable to children studying in that they lack light, quiet, privacy,
somewhere to study. They later came to recognize that clothes and appearance militate
against the child as he or she proceeds upward in the education system, noting by
1963-64 that drop-out was occurring in 5th and 6th grade. They observed that there
was no perceived relationship between educational achievement and future work
opportunity. In 1961 they indicate interest in providing careers advice to school
leavers and made some attempt to deal with schools where they knew of Aborigines
who would probably leave in the following year. In 1962 they were conscious of the
difficulties that existed and were seeking some kind of Education Department research
to help identify the nature of the retardation and difficulties. They did not manage to
mount a single research project in this area, however, during their entire period of
office; this task was to await the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

By 1962 the Aborigines Welfare Board was beginning to realize the importance of
some form of financial aid and this was expressed in the Annual Report:

'It is not Board policy to separate children from their families for the purpose of
their education, but in a few cases it has been necessary to arrange board away from
home because of special circumstances, such as the lack of secondary education
facilities in the area. (p.4.)

They noted in 1963 the need for adult education, which they viewed primarily as a
method of dealing with the ignorance of adults which they saw as blocking the progress
of students. They observed in 1963 that children are not progressing above form 4 but
were optimistic that this would occur soon.

In 1965 the Board's annual report notes that there were practically no Aborigines in
the trades and none in the professions. The same year, despite their financial assistance
schemes, the report stated that 'there is a "drop-out" by pupils after Form II so that
relatively few continue to Intermediate or beyond. None has yet matriculated in
Victoria.' (p.7.)

In this year again the Board met the cost of uniforms up to $40 and books to $20 for
many students in secondary school. However, in retrospect the data available shows the
Board to have been at that time in contact with only a relatively small segment of the
Aboriginal population. In fact it was not until 1967 that the extent of the educational
needs and the more accurate picture of the population began to emerge fully. Throughout
the period the Aborigines Welfare Board was constantly dogged by major staff shortages,
not only because it failed to fill positions that were vacant but because of an inability
to persuade the Public Service Board to create the necessary positions.

In the 1965 report the Board continued to express concern at the low enrolment of
Aboriginal pre-school children: 'The Board hopes that where possible more Aboriginal
children will be enrolled at pre-schools.' (p.7.)
Again, in the 1965 report:

The Board hopes that an appropriate body will be able to carry out a programme of research into educational retardation amongst Aboriginal children; perhaps initially directed as documenting impressions and selecting talented children at about 5th grade primary standard for later encouragement (p.7.)

In 1966 the Board report again indicated that no Aborigines had matriculated and expressed concern that its programmes had not yet been successful in this direction.

The financial expenditure of the Board on education is difficult to obtain, but the figures for 1964 and 1967 give some indication of the dimension of expenditure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A.W.B. Expenditure</th>
<th>Voluntary Organizations</th>
<th>Government aid to voluntary organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>$4,334</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$2,000 (AEISF)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the period considerable scholarship and bursary activity was developed by voluntary organizations. The Abschol movement from the National Union of Australian University Students had a large fund and was offering substantial scholarships to any Aboriginal student who wished to enter tertiary education. The Aborigines Advancement League offered a considerable number of scholarships at a value under $100; the Save the Children Fund financed a number of scholarships to children throughout the state where they had committees; they also financed one or two special scholarships enabling students to go to private schools.

There were other special scholarships being offered by private and other schools and the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund (AEISF) was expanding into the primary school field. The largest scheme, the A.E.I.S.F.; developed as a result of the frustrations that I had already experienced within the Aborigines Welfare Board in working in the Western District. The opportunity arose to speak to Carey Grammar School, which had a scholarship and some funds, and the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund was born. It was an experimental scheme, initially in secondary schools. Its purpose was to provide an incentive that would encourage parents to keep their children attending school regularly and keep them at school longer than was common; encourage the children to remain at school and perform well. The scheme was developed because no other form of activity had been successful in achieving this set of objectives. The scheme intended to operate first in one area of the state and then in a further two as an experiment. The incentive was monthly payments of money to the parent and the child on the basis of their Form and the record of their attendance at school the previous month. For failure to attend more than one or two half days without written excuse the payment for that month could be lost and yet it could be picked up again by regular attendance next month. The scheme was planned and financed from Melbourne but it was operated by a local
committee who later were to be mainly school teachers. The amount of the incentive ranged from as little as 50c. per week for the child and $1.50 for the parent, up to $2 per week for the student and $3 for the parent. The only basis for eligibility was that the child should be of Aboriginal descent and in the care of Aboriginal parents. The scheme was demonstrated to be successful in a comprehensive study, including detailed comparative statistics, which was undertaken by John Munday and myself with a grant from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in December 1969. In 1975 when this document was being finally redrafted the firm of Cresap, McCormick & Paget Inc. Management Consultants had produced a final evaluation of the whole A.E.I.S.F. Programme financed by the remainder of the funds before the scheme wound up.

At an evaluation meeting with the local committee at Swan Hill it was pointed out to the executive of A.E.I.S.F. that the problems which made the scholarship necessary were developed by bad habits in primary school, and as a result of these discussions the scheme was expanded to bring in primary school pupils. It was a scheme that was supported by all the other voluntary organizations that offered scholarships except Save the Children Fund and it received annual grants from the Aborigines Welfare Board. The scheme is significant because later it was to be the single scheme which covered the whole of Victoria in every school in which there were Aboriginal students, and Victoria was the only state to undertake such an arrangement.

In all, the Aborigines Welfare Board was active to the limited extent of its resources and staffing in encouraging Aboriginal students to attend school and to continue with their education. It slowly developed information about the numbers and distribution of Aboriginal students around Victoria and thus was able to formulate more clearly the nature and extent of the problem that it was confronting.

The Board, in its final significant policy document, laid down the statement that would not have been challenged even today: 'The Board accordingly views education as a continuing process for the entire Aboriginal community, from the preschooling of infants to the education of mature adults.' (Aboriginal Policies of the Aborigines Welfare Board, p.5.)

The document expressed the Board’s intention to view education in its widest possible context. It envisaged bursaries and scholarships extended to other cases of need that it located, it saw the need for a special Aboriginal Education Committee to co-ordinate the activities of voluntary organizations and the development of a special Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education. It espoused at the pre-school level a special scholarship or bursary which would ensure the payment of fees, as it stated clearly in the policy statement:

The Board will encourage all Aboriginal children three to five to attend pre-schools. Where family incomes are insufficient to meet pre-school fees, the Board will undertake payment of fees, or part of fees. Where such pre-schools do not exist in areas of large Aboriginal population, the Board should foster their establishment. Where it is relevant and applicable, the Board will subsidise the transporting of children to the nearest pre-school. There is scientific proof that children who attend pre-school show a greater
performance and attainment level up to matriculation than those who do not attend such schools. (Aboriginal Policies of the Aborigines Welfare Board, p.7.)

It proposed continuation classes and adult education, and the appointment of an adult education officer. ‘An ultimate aim is the appointment of Aborigines as adult educationists.’ (p.8.)

The policy suggests that the need for educational hostels should be investigated with the Education Department. Very little that was to be undertaken under the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was not considered in this document. The Aborigines Welfare Board never succeeded in developing its programmes. It was confronted continuously with the uncertainty of size of the problem, the complexity of multiple variables which it was not able to sort through. It was never adequately staffed to do more than scratch the surface and never adequately funded to plan and undertake the sort of research that the superintendent believed was necessary. It was constantly confronted with an organizational problem viz. the superintendent and the Board viewed many of the major issues differently.

Education was valued as important by the Aborigines Welfare Board. It slowly gathered data demonstrating comparative need. It supported directly and indirectly scholarships and economic incentives to encourage Aboriginal education. While it recognized the need and could formulate the activities that should be undertaken (toward the latter half of the 1960’s) it never acted to implement them. Why? Mainly because it lacked internal cohesiveness as an organization, it lacked clear lines of authority and policy and support for them. It lacked an understanding of the interlocking nature of broad-aim programmes and the technology and the confidence to implement its ideas. It suffered from conflicting goals and, worse, from a data gap; a resource deficiency and the lack of a clearly delineated practice model. The values and principles on which it operated led to constant conflict between the Board, administrative staff and welfare staff and between the Board and Aborigines. The dilemmas led to compromises that resulted in programmes which contained the minimal areas of agreement between the competing pressure groups and thus to programme activity that was often least effective, but relatively free of public conflict.

ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD HOUSING POLICY — PROGRAMMES 1958-1967

Housing was one of the major fields of activity for the Aborigines Welfare Board. It is possible that housing consumed more resources of money, board discussion time, administrative staff time, field staff time, and more energy than any other activity of the Board. I believe that it reflects not only the high capital cost of housing with its attendant visibility but also a strong belief in its importance as a ‘solution’ to the ‘Aboriginal Problem’ (terms used frequently in the minutes of the Aborigines Welfare Board). In order to test this impression that Housing was in fact of overriding significance to the Board I subjected the minutes of the Aborigines Welfare Board to a quasi-statistical content analysis. This involved counting the total number of headings in the minutes of each year, separating out the sub-total for all headings referring to
Housing and then considering those sub-headings as a percentage of the total headings. What this quasi-statistical process showed was that almost half of the topics recorded in the minutes related to housing and this proportion remains more or less consistent through the years 1959-1967 as shown in the accompanying table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dates - First &amp; Last Meeting Each Year</th>
<th>Number of Meetings</th>
<th>Total Minute Headings</th>
<th>Headings Referring to Housing Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>27 Aug./4 Dec.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>29 Jan./10 Dec.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>11 Jan./14 Dec.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>13 Jan./14 Dec.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>11 Jan./14 Dec.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>11 Jan./13 Dec.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963*</td>
<td>14 Feb./12 Dec.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>30 Jan./11 Dec.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965*</td>
<td>5 Feb./10 Dec.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966*</td>
<td>29 Jan./9 Dec.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967*</td>
<td>10 Feb./15 Dec.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \bar{X} = \frac{143}{13} = 11 \quad \bar{X} = \frac{3265}{13} = 296 \quad \bar{X} = \frac{1545}{140} = 47\% \]

**TABLE 2: Aborigines Welfare Board, Proportion of Time Spent considering housing matters**

The Table has no statistical merit but clearly shows that approximately half of the topics recorded in the Minutes of the Aborigines Welfare Board related to housing matters, which suggest that this was a matter of primary importance to the Board during its lifetime.

*1963* This year, four of the eleven meetings were of the executive committee of the Board and a fifth, the December meeting, lacked a quorum. One was an executive committee meeting, three were meetings lacking a quorum and one was a Lake Tyers Policy meeting.

*1965* Two of the meetings were special, one of policy and one on Morewell village.

*1966* Two were policy meetings and one was the Housing Sub-Committee which has been excluded.

*1967* Three meetings were policy implementation meetings regarding the future and two were meetings of the Advisory Committee on Education.

An examination of the budget suggests that in this area as well the Board considered housing as an operation which merited expenditure and about half of the financial resources annually. The figures show that in its first year of operation the Board spent 13% of its income on housing whilst in the final year it expended about 57% of its total budget on housing. (See table 3 Appendix D.) Figures for the in between years
are difficult to locate because they were compiled by the Chief Secretary's department.

Thus, there is reasonable evidence that at least half of the Board's resources of money and meeting time were spent on housing matters. As a member of staff for two years (1964 and 1965), I am aware that a significant proportion of staff time was devoted to housing. This included; talking to families who were inadequately housed about the state of their housing, persuading them to apply for government housing, making arrangements with property and administrative staff over completion dates, getting agreements filled in, helping families with the actual move and following up the family after the move on rental and survival issues. It is also apparent that considerable time and effort by administrative staff and clerical staff was devoted to this issue.

I therefore found it disturbing to be able to obtain no accurate data in this field. Using the total resources of the (later) Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs accountant it was impossible to reconstruct with any degree of certainty the actual money spent on land, houses, or maintenance 1957-1967. It was not even possible using the accountant and senior administrative officer of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (in 1971) to be sure of the actual number of dwellings acquired by the Aborigines Welfare Board (by purchase or building).

Some indication of the number of houses involved 1957-1967 through the Housing Commission of Victoria and the Aborigines Welfare Board, and their cost, can be obtained from the annual reports (see table 4). This data, however, is confused by an examination of the actual records as the notes following this table suggest. There are four main sources of information on these matters:

(a) The Annual Reports
(b) The budget and the budget files
(c) Property files
(d) Subject files

These sources together have been carefully cross-checked with the Ministry accountant and result in the statements that appear in the Annual Reports. However, these sources never agree in detail with one another. There is no certainty that the total number of houses constructed by the Aborigines Welfare Board was 120, 123, 125 or perhaps some close figure. An attempt was made to cross check the information by tracking down the insurance policies for the properties in any one year. Because of the rather chaotic manner in which the Board was forced to undertake its administration — with Board members undertaking some actions, Property Officer others, the Superintendent others, the Secretary making some sort of attempt to co-ordinate what he knew about and the whole being processed through the Chief Secretary's Department — it is necessary to be satisfied with approximate figures.

To give some idea of the nature of the discrepancies to be considered, I have included (in table 4a Appendix D) a table compiled from the Property and Budget files which show the number of houses purchased each year to be somewhat different to the previous table. Considering the state of records during the period, a fair degree of consensus is shown, and one settles for close approximations showing broad dimensional issues and situations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of dwellings supplied by the Housing Commission of Victoria to Aboriginal families at the request of AWB</th>
<th>No. of dwellings Aborigines Welfare Board acquired</th>
<th>$ expended by Aborigines Welfare Board on buildings and maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>30 HCV dwellings at 1958 occupied by Aborigines</td>
<td>19 dwellings on settlements plus 10 acquired</td>
<td>No data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$8,610 58/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>No data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>No data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$75,000 62/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$233,000 63/64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$164,000 64/65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$156,000 65/66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$173,000 66/67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$305,000 67/68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 30 + 142</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,106,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some houses were provided for Departmental staff. Table data compiled from Annual Reports.

TABLE 4

Notes Related to the Table but not Derived from it:
1. The data indicates that 1963-1967 41 HCV units were vacated and incurred a maintenance cost of $923.52 which is inconceivable.
2. The data also shows that 125 AWB dwellings consumed $47,082 on maintenance up to 1967.
3. The property files, however, show $58,124 to be the sum.
4. AVERAGE expenditure PER AWB HOUSE CAPITAL AND MAINTENANCE APPEARS to be therefore APPROXIMATELY $12,800 1962-1967 inclusive.

Whilst housing was a vital area of Aborigines Welfare Board activity, numerous key issues associated with it remained unresolved. The fact that housing was so substantial an aspect of Aborigines Welfare Board activity probably exacerbated the problem caused by the Board's inability to resolve them. Another major factor associated with housing was the issue of rent. From the beginning there were continuous difficulties associated with the question of how rent should be dealt with. What should be the Board's position on rental subsidies? How much? To whom should it be paid? Should it be collected? What should be done if tenants did not pay? Should rent be an absolute minimum or should it be based on some scale which took account of the fact that different families had different situations according to size, income, etc? If a family was evicted or forced to leave a Board house should they be allowed or even encouraged to rent another Board house? Should families who were not acceptable as tenants to the Housing Commission of Victoria be accepted as tenants of the Aborigines Welfare Board? Should families who were acceptable as tenants of the Housing Commission of Victoria be accepted as tenants of the Aborigines Welfare Board?
Should the same rent be charged for a town house as a half-way or sub-standard settlement house? Should rent be charged for the houses on settlements? Should rent be charged when there were no staff to ensure that it was collected? Should people be encouraged, forced or evicted from their homes when rent was not paid and when there were no welfare staff to deal with their problems?

As time passed the nature of the questions became more complex. To provide some indication of the nature of the rental issue Table 5 looks at the position as it was in June 1965 for the then identifiable Aborigines Welfare Board rental houses.

I was able to gauge the dimension of the rental problem by making use of a compilation of figures prepared by the superintendent for the Board in June of 1965. They show that approx. three quarters of the rent is being paid and approx. one quarter is not, that approx. three quarters of tenants are paying and approx. one quarter are not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Houses excluding Framlingham</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>No. weeks occupancy</th>
<th>No. weeks arrears</th>
<th>% Weeks in Arrears</th>
<th>No. &amp; % Tennants in Arrears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Min. X Max.</td>
<td>Min. X Max.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>50c. to $2.00</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>6 22 120</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5
Rent Arrears Aborigines Welfare Board Houses June 1965

In July of 1968 when the same man obtained the figures again he was able to show that 36% of tenants compared to 25% of tenants in 1965. In 1968, however, 24% of Aboriginal Housing Commission of Victoria tenants were in arrears.

The situation was also confused by inconsistencies. An example of such an inconsistency is the relationship of rent to income. To illustrate the issue I took the Robinvale area and looked at the relationship between these two factors as it applied to town and to settlement houses. The quality of house in each of the two categories being consistent. The figures were taken out for early in 1968 and were compiled at the same time and by the same man as those cited in the previous paragraph. They illustrate further the difficulty the Aborigines Welfare Board had in acting consistently even in so important an area as rental housing. Nb. The Aborigines Welfare Board was heavily subsidising all tenancies Aborigines Welfare Board and Housing Commission of Victoria in 1968.
### Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Houses</th>
<th>Settlement Houses Manatunga Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income $</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rent $</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.P. &amp; A.P.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.P.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.P.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
- **W.P.** = Widows Pension
- **A.P.** = Age Pension
- **I.P.** = Invalid Pension

### Table 7

**Rent Arrears — Housing Commission of Victoria**

Table 7 shows the amount of arrears for each year for tenants of the Housing Commission of Victoria who were known to be Aborigines and who were subsidized by the Aborigines Welfare Board. They clearly indicate that rent collection was a problem to the Housing Commission, but on a smaller scale than the Aborigines Welfare Board, but they indicate something else — had these tenants been other than Aborigines they would have been evicted prior to their arrears reaching this point. They were not because the Housing Commission expected to have the rent arrears met by the Aborigines Welfare Board and they regularly were.

The escalating nature of the difficulty created by the Aborigines Welfare Board's failure to come to grips with this problem is shown by the nature of Aborigines Welfare Board expenditure on maintaining its own rental housing.

The situation with regard to maintenance is little different; the Housing Commission had maintenance debts from Aborigines, the amounts are not high, on the other hand the Aborigines Welfare Board did have high maintenance costs especially due to damage. (See table 8.)
Another aspect of the housing situation which is of significance is the fact that the Board offered furniture to its new tenants. Initially at Rumbalara and at Manatunga this was provided free by donors. Later furniture was supplied from secondhand stores; it was usually of poor quality and very cheap. The repayments on this furniture were supposed to be made through the rent system but in late 1968, about twelve months after the transition from the Aborigines Welfare Board to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, debts from furniture and other loans were calculated to be in the order of $60,000. It is interesting to compare this figure with that of $21,209, an estimate made in February, 1967, as to the total extent of outstanding furniture and other loans. Some of this was probably intended to be grants, but there was no way that records could establish those who had promised or offered to pay and those who had not. At the end of 1972 the situation remained unresolved.

The Board made a decision to subsidize rent and the effect of this was twofold. First it decided to fix an upper limit of $4 on its own properties, this later became $5 by a process never recorded in the files. Settlement houses, it was decided, would be, at most, $1.50. Second, the Board subsidized tenants housed by the Housing Commission. Usually the rent payable on Housing Commission homes was higher than that charged by the Board and this created some interesting problems. It was often easier to get a Housing Commission home; they housed more people than the Board but they were slightly dearer. The Housing Commission of Victoria were more demanding landlords and they did not equip their houses quite as well as some of the Board dwellings in regard to washing machines, lino, blinds, etc.

Throughout the decade of the Board there were constant problems with regard to the collection of rent. The methods of collecting were as various as it was possible to conceive. In some instances people were simply instructed to mail it in an envelope every week or fortnight. In others the local Housing Commission office collected it for the Aborigines Welfare Board. In the more densely settled areas a rent collector was appointed to undertake rent collection on a part-time basis. On occasions the Property Officer or the welfare officer was expected to collect the rent and on numerous occasions this led to considerable difficulties in sorting out the welfare officer’s role. The haphazard nature of the rent collection system, the slow build-up of arrears, and the staff shortage that accompanied it combined to create the difficulties to be faced in 1968 when the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs inherited an uncontrolled situation.
A whole ethos had developed amongst part of the Aboriginal community about the expectations of the Aborigines Welfare Board (the government), and this created problems, especially when there was no action against non-payers. Regular payers were frequently incensed by the injustice of their situation. It is true that no one was ever formally evicted from an Aborigines Welfare Board house, but the turnover was there. Several people left houses from which they should have been evicted. They left behind debts not only to the Board but also to almost everybody in town with whom they had had dealings. When families thus left houses from which, in other circumstances, they would have been evicted it was convenient; when it happened the Board did not have to be the bad agency who threw the poor Aborigines on to the street, but the damage done to some of these families was severe.

In general, the Board took the view that they would house those people whom the Housing Commission were not willing to take because of their poor standards. This, of course, justified the difficulties they had with these families with regard to rent, behaviour in the neighbourhood and maintenance costs. The Board also housed families in localities where the Housing Commission did not intend to establish housing estates. It was a constant paradox to the Board, frequently expressed in early reports, that they were expected to house the families whom the Housing Commission claimed would be unable to cope with standard housing. These families often refused to meet reasonable standards with regard to the houses they rented. If they were to be evicted, the Board would be attacked for throwing out these poor people to return to circumstances of poverty on river bank and humpy camps of the undesirable sort from which they had been removed (rescued?).

To the Board and their staff it often seemed that they had a tiger by the tail. Constantly during the period there was the vexed, and never answered question of blow-ins (relatives or friends to whom obligations of one sort or another were owed) which resulted in frequent overcrowding and frequent sorties with the neighbours, and occasionally to a family being forced to leave a street or an area or a particular house. Frequently when the Aborigines Welfare Board provided a house for one family they then found themselves housing two or more families in the one dwelling. It was one of the constant thorns in the side of the Board that their hopeful tenants would not ensure that these 'undesirables' were kept away. They interfered with the children's sleep, they drained the family's resources and incentive and they were responsible (as the Board saw it) for many a breadwinner losing or giving up his job. In all they posed a problem of significant dimensions.

During the first few years the efforts of the Board were concentrated on the river bank settlements and the worst humpy camps. They worked to build staging houses and to remove the humpies, and they were successful to a very significant extent. They built houses and they encouraged families to apply for and move into the homes they built and the houses constructed by the Housing Commission. Through their direct efforts the Board succeeded in rehousing approximately 250 families in its lifetime. They were instrumental in improving the housing situation and they should certainly be credited with encouraging a number of other families who, on their own
initiative, found housing and many more who applied for housing which they were to obtain during the administration of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

After the initial focus on the riverbank humpies, the Board began to focus attention on the Lake Tyers families and the situation in Gippsland, which remained the most depressed area in the state up to 1972 when I ceased to observe the situation. The Board were confronted with extreme difficulties in this area. Aborigines in Gippsland had difficulties of isolation and distance greater than in any other area in the state and the government in the past had concentrated in East Gippsland all those people who had had difficulties in other areas of the state. The problems related, not only to the lack of experience of these families in the patterns of home care and responsibility, but also to the activities of previous administrations in regard to Lake Tyers, which had increased the patterns of dependence and apathy to an alarming degree. The major issues were perceived by the Board and the annual reports gave fair indication of the nature of the Board's understanding about the housing situation.

Each year, as Table 9 (see Appendix D) shows, they state their estimate of the number of families needing housing and give some indication of the number of houses provided by the Housing Commission and themselves. Interesting though the history of the settlements is in this regard, it is my intention to mention only briefly some of the significant aspects of the Lake Tyers rehousing programme as it illustrates the Board's approach, and thus highlights the conflicting goals or from another perspective the lack of congruence between goals and methods for achieving them.

In 1959 the Board found several hundred families in various old dwellings. Welfare Staff reported that families in these dwellings in inner suburban cottages, mill cottages and old condemned houses, shared accommodation with other friends and relatives. This inevitably led to the overcrowding characteristic of the slum environments described in much of the literature. Changing these conditions was one of the most urgent tasks facing the Board and priority was given to the improvement of shack housing on river banks and in humpy camps. In the beginning the Board was delighted to learn that some 30 Aboriginal families were housed by the Housing Commission of Victoria, and when they also learned that many of them were not able to maintain their accommodation because they could not keep up rental payments, it seemed that the most constructive action was to ensure that they stayed there. When this meant paying the rent they did so —

...taking the view that it was essential to preserve the tenancy and to keep the family together rather than allow them to drift back to sub-standard living conditions and become a heavier burden not only on the Board but on other social service activities of the state. (Annual Report, 1959, p.5.)

In the report of the same year is the description of the lack of accommodation at Nowa Nowa, a timber mill town just a few miles east of the road that enters the Lake Tyers property. Nowa Nowa was to become one of the most difficult areas in regard to housing and living conditions and, to some extent, remained so up until 1972.
It was a town that had a small population, almost no community facilities, and a car was essential to get to Lakes Entrance or some other area where there existed basic medical and other services. The Board planned to move three old Lake Tyers shacks into the town on three blocks of Crown land they had acquired. They intended to add wash-rooms and house three families; they did so. The result was the creation of slum dwellings worse than those remaining at Lake Tyers. The problem that this highlights is the oversimplistic perception that the Board operated on. The lack of awareness of the total situation of the lives of these families. The belief that if somehow they could be moved a bit away from other families they would act like Middle class white families.

It is significant that the report on housing concludes that the principal factor impeding an all-out drive for improvement of Aboriginal housing was lack of finance, and suggests that with adequate finance it could embark on some special projects and on a scheme of housing loans. It also states that the immediate provision of some 200 houses to accommodate families would go a long way toward rehabilitation of the majority of the Victorian Aboriginal population, and notes that:

'generally Aboriginal housing throughout the state is undoubtedly of the lowest standard of all poor housing, and large families of children are being brought up under these conditions...' (Annual Report, 1959, p.8.)

When the Board came to consider the future of Lake Tyers it said:

In the long range view the station will ultimately become a refuge for aged and infirm Aborigines. The Board cannot see a healthy future for the younger, able-bodied people while they remain at Lake Tyers. It is entirely in their interest that they become accustomed to a normal way of life — working and living among the general community. (p.8.)

The report also states:

Able-bodied Aborigines who are capable of working and becoming self-supporting will be given opportunities and encouragement to leave the station when alternative housing is provided for them. It is not proposed to cast families adrift from the station and expect them to adopt the conventional way of life immediately. Life on the station will be regarded as a period of preparation and training to equip families for adjustment to living elsewhere. Problems akin to those of a slum clearance project are likely to be encountered in implementing this plan because Lake Tyers residents, like their fellow citizens in reclamation areas, will be reluctant to leave their old homes and commence a new life elsewhere. (p.8.)

Not very surprisingly people did feel this way.

In 1960 the Board staff undertook a survey of Aboriginal housing in Victoria and found that 222 families, totalling 1,156 individuals (approximately five people per family), were living in conditions which were more than significantly sub-standard. They found frequently that several families (often large ones) shared the same accommodation. To compensate, they found 110 families, 500 people, who were living in satisfactory houses
in various parts of the state. The Board was confronted with the necessity to explain how each time they assessed housing the numbers requiring rental accommodation increased in spite of the fact that some families had been housed in the interim. They resolved this problem by postulating that the population of young married persons was growing so rapidly that it was far outstripping both deaths and the possibility of keeping up with the immediate known housing needs. Staff believed that these young people, now living with their parents, were becoming educated to the better-type housing which the Board was providing and would not be satisfied with the previous sub-standard living conditions. The fact that the staff was locating more Aborigines is not mentioned. They even seem unaware of this aspect.

In the June 1961 Annual Report is the statement:

Soon after its appointment the Board realized the importance of adequate housing for Aboriginal families and that rehousing of persons in poor living conditions was an urgent necessity. The provision of new houses, however, was a costly undertaking, particularly in the remote districts of the state, and sufficient funds have not been forthcoming to enable the desired progress to be made. The Board therefore does not regard housing activities during this year as adequate. (p.7.)

The report continues:

In its initial stages, the Board concentrated on building staging settlements. These settlements, at Mooroopna and Robinvale, were emergency projects to clear away two particularly disgraceful groups of humpies and were designed as centres where families could be trained to manage normal houses in the general community. But the settlements are somewhat segregated. Although a few such families have moved into town housing, others who are ready to do so too are still waiting. (p.8.)

Nowa Nowa received its appalling sub-standard Lake Tyers cottages which were to be the cause of considerable contention for the next decade. Six prefabricated houses were established in Dimboola in significantly unwanted real estate areas and provided the Aborigines Welfare Board with rental and maintenance headaches. The Mooroopna River bank was finally cleared away completely. The relative increase in numbers wanting houses was attributed to the high proportion of the population who were young and who are marrying and wanting accommodation. Most importantly they note in their report:

Unless there is an overall annual housing plan it is not possible for staff to work effectively with Aboriginal families to persuade them to improve their living standards in order to be ready for proper housing. Too often staff have encountered families in depressed housing circumstances who have lost heart because they cannot see the prospect of being re-housed in decent surroundings. Officers and Board members continually feel a strong sense of frustration because the housing programme is progressing at too slow a rate. It is not believed that re-housing will solve all the problems of the families in depressed circumstances, but it will produce a significant improvement and provide a more settled environment in which other problems can be dealt with. (Annual Report, 1961, p.9.)

In the same report there is discussion on the future of Lake Tyers and on the wisdom of the Board's decision to encourage able-bodied Aborigines to leave there rather than develop the area. The report even states that:
‘It has been proved beyond doubt this year that Aboriginal families can leave the station and establish themselves elsewhere.’ (p.10.)

And so they continue:
‘It is therefore the Board’s intention when sufficient funds are provided to proceed with this policy and encourage as many families as possible to transfer to normal community life.’ (p.10.)

And the report continues even further:
‘Opinion is hardening among Board members that a rehabilitation scheme such as this is essential; otherwise young children on the station will be brought up to a life of complete dependence which is quite contrary to their interests.’ (p.10.)

In the June 1963 report we observe further developments which I was able to follow through to 1972. The 1963 report tells us that:

The standard house which the Board had been building for Aborigines families is of weatherboards with 8¼ squares floor area, which comprises three bedrooms, a large living room and kitchen and a combined laundry-bathroom. Equipment built into the houses include a slow combustion stove (which cost in maintenance and inconvenience), hot water service, kitchen sink, food preparation benches and cupboards, room heater (which in more than 2/3 instances smoked so badly it has discoloured and fogged up the rooms), bath, shower and trough. Each bedroom has a built-in wardrobe, and in sewered areas each house is provided with an internal toilet. Floor coverings are provided to the main living areas. (Lino that came up in an extraordinarily large number of instances). The cost of each unit, including woodshed, clothes hoist and fencing is about $6,200 plus the cost of the land, which varies according to the district (p.9.)

The 1963 report makes a statement which in the light of later circumstances seems almost unbelievable; yet it was made very early, when the true nature of the situation was not visible:
‘The rent position is generally good and there is no great problem of arrears, most tenants having responded well,’ (p.9.)

In the light of the situation as we know it to have developed during the era of the Board, the statement is either misleading or the situation following this year deteriorated alarmingly, perhaps after the initial euphoria. In the same report the outlook on the future of Lake Tyers' residents outside the station is painted as grim. The report states that the Board set out to change the system and introduce a positive training programme so that families who so desired and chose could move out equipped to survive and earn a living in the wider community. But the same report states clearly that the objectives have not yet been achieved, in fact not even begun to be attempted, even the physical and sanitary conditions being appalling.

In the same report mention is made of the first three young resident families on the settlement, families desirous of the opportunity to re-settle away from the station and to whom the Board was determined to give the chance:
... they were placed in employment and all necessary arrangements for their settlement into a new way of life were undertaken.' (p. 18.)

The report continues that:
'It has been misrepresented that these families were 'forced' to leave the station and that compulsion and coercion would be used to move other families away from the station.' (p. 18.)

The report also states that:
A new emotionally-charged phrase 'forced assimilation' was used by irresponsible opponents of the Board during this controversy. The Board has no power to 'force' Aborigines to live in any place; they are entitled to choose where they shall live. (p. 18.)

Because I was able to follow these three families a year or so later and continue contact for some further 6-7 years, both through the files and later through personal contact, I intend to include the next statement from the annual report and then a brief summary of the comments of the three families concerned. In each case the statement is made by the male breadwinner of the household.

It must be repeated that the Board had discussed these plans with the residents of the station and offered to all the families the chance to settle away from the station in districts of their own choice. It was pointed out to families that better amenities would be available and that their children would have the opportunity to grow up in a 'normal' environment and to lead a full life. The difficulties which they would face were also pointed out and they were assured that the Board's Welfare staff would be available to advise them during their settling-in period. Despite the wave of propaganda from opponents of the Board, the first group of families remained firm in their convictions, and they felt confident of their ability to succeed. (p. 18.)

It is my opinion that the report is a gross distortion of what occurred and I believe the opponents of the Board on this occasion had every reason to be concerned. The outcome for all three families was some kind of failure. Every family suffered marital crises and difficulties in coping with their children, with the neighbours, with employment and with the neighbourhood in which they were placed. All three stated openly in discussion with me that they had not wanted to come to the towns in which the houses had been built BEFORE they were approached to move, and all three stated that they had been virtually told by a responsible member of the Board that they could expect no further real help if they were not willing to move out of their sub-standard dwellings into a new and well-serviced home in a country town provided, at their request, by the Board. The assurances that the welfare staff would assist during the moving-in and adjustment period were met in substance for the first month or so — after which they felt hopelessly isolated and alone, even though in all three instances there were local service people who really did their very best to help. In the case of all three they ran up taxi bills (travelling to each other or to relatives in distant areas) of as much as $200. In all, the experiment was a failure, as were the majority of other movements of families from the Lake Tyers station. In fact the total lack of development at the station which might have led families
to a state of semi-preparedness for the outside world was in practice resisted by the Board itself during the whole of its existence. The verbal acknowledgement of the need to do this was made, but the technology for implementation and the awareness of the nature of programmes necessary was lacking.

In a real sense the Lake Tyers families epitomised the nature of the difficulties that were involved in the rehousing programme. The overall numbers are not as great as one is led to expect from the high visibility of the groups and the high degree of concern focussed on them.

Table 10 (see Appendix D) gives some indication from summary data collected by the superintendent in 1966 of the extent of the Lake Tyers situation. The problem, however, extended to other families who lived in Gippsland, especially East Gippsland, who may have been on Lake Tyers, or if they were not, were certainly related to families from the station. In June 1964 the superintendent studied the area and submitted a special report to the Board because the area was considered so significant a problem for the purposes of social welfare planning.

Over 110 Aboriginal families live in Gippsland (about 630 persons); this population is increasing. A few families live in Board or Commission houses; some are in good accommodation on saw mills, but a substantial number live in shacks, huts or tents. Most of the families pay no rent, few have any furniture and standards of home care are poor, although these are improving as a result of activities of Board and Health Department staff and the work of the Save the Children Fund.

... Life for these Aborigines is characterized by a succession of crises. Families do not function as part of the wider community; they have brief contacts with 'whites' at shops, taxis, schools or post offices, but make few real social contacts. They do not fully use the available community facilities amenities or services which are there for all to use. (p.9.) (quoted in 1964 Annual Report)

The Board clearly committed itself when it said in the same report that it had decided not to improve the living conditions at the station. It preferred to continue its policy of rehousing those residents who desire to be rehoused, in fact, whom it could persuade to re-settle:

'... with the ultimate objective of terminating the existing conditions under which Aborigines are maintained at the Reserve.' (Annual Report, 1964, p.9.)

In the period to June 1965 there was a continuously growing awareness that things were not well with many of the rehoused families, and not only those who were from Lake Tyers or Gippsland. In fact those people from almost any area who had no adequate contacts in the town and no previous experience of town living were in difficulties.

Families who have been relocated in houses in country towns sometimes appear as displaced persons, unsuited for the new environment in which they suddenly find themselves. Many of the families are unable or not ready, without help, to make use of
community .. facilities available ... (Annual Report, 1965, p.5.)

In the same year there continued to be concern for the practice of families doubling-up and overcrowding, overtaxing the facilities of a dwelling. There was again considerable comment in meetings and in the annual report about the Aborigines' habits of wandering or migrating between the households of various relatives and there was realization that their inter-household visiting enabled the group to maintain itself and reinforce kinship solidarity. Its importance was noted, but with concern for the consequences.

In the annual report for 1965 the following statement is made:

So far the Board has declined to evict any tenant for non-payment of rent because this would result in the disruption of a family and add to overcrowding elsewhere. With the one hand the Board as landlord would have to evict, and with the other the Board as welfare agency would have to find alternative housing. The Board has not been able to evict because there is nowhere for such families to retreat to, except 'shack life'. For this reason the need is felt for some spare houses (such as a settlement) to which families who do not 'make the grade' could fall back; then defaulting families could be evicted and our threats would assume some meaning. (p.11.)

This is perhaps one of the most significant comments that the Board was to make on housing. The realization of the true nature of the situation is revealed in the poignancy of the frustration and apparent paradoxicality of the situation. We will return to this point later.

Poor housekeeping standards are also attracting comment. There has been no real programme of training and preparation of Aboriginal families for housing. Some competent families have settled into new housing quite confidently but this does not help those who are in a very real sense 'displaced persons', unready and ill-prepared for living in a conventional house in a street, in a town. (p.11.)

And again the recognition appears that there is some sort of pressing need for training before people go into houses, yet a clear statement of the Board's inability to find a solution to the problem. It is perhaps not surprisingly a problem that is not to have a simple solution even when the massive additional resources of the Ministry were directed to it. The reason for this lies in the fact that there are numerous inter-related difficulties associated with solving the problem. Outside agents are necessarily required to artificially resocialize people who are not necessarily highly motivated toward the change sought.

The Board is, however, not bereft of initiative in this area:

It is evident that in future Aborigines should be involved in decisions about houses. (This refers to their location and other details.) A training programme by means of a housekeeper service for families already in houses, and training in home-making in suitable surroundings before families move to new houses is desirable. In addition the rate at which houses are provided needs to be increased. There is a need to employ more rent collectors. A home purchase scheme is necessary. All this implies increased staff. (Annual Report, 1965, p.12.)
In fact the recommendations made here, the recognition of the nature of the difficulties that are faced and the type of solution required are very much to the point. Some were to become a part of the policy of the new Ministry 2½ years later, just as the recommendations of the McLean report became a part of the policy of the Aborigines Welfare Board. However, there is a difference. The new Ministry was to develop a philosophy in which the elements had meaning in terms of the specified objectives. That is the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was to apply a socio-behavioural strategy which turned the old elements into an integrated action-focused programme. But then, the Ministry was to have the benefit of a decade of trial and error, of data collection, of concerned thinking and experimenting.

In the report of June 1966 there is comment on the policy which has been pursued in relation to the allocation of Aborigines Welfare Board housing, a continuously contentious issue. The Aborigines Welfare Board sponsored Housing Commission of Victoria housing in areas where Aborigines wanted housing and where the Housing Commission had estates, and it says of its own housing activities that they were: ‘limited to places where the Commission either did not have any houses or had such an extensive waiting list that it was unable to assist’ (p.13.)

Two more sets of statements are made by the Board in regard to housing that were to be either prophetic or influential as regards the future, and which help to account for the situation and make it comprehensible.

The Policy document compiled by the Special Sub-Committee of the Board (1966) spells out the principles on which it believes the Board should operate in future. These include:

* The justification of additional assistance in housing and accommodation.
* Recommendation that the Housing Commission of Victoria assumes responsibility for Aboriginal housing in Victoria with officers of the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Housing Commission conferring.
* Aborigines Welfare Board retain responsibility for Aborigines ineligible for Housing Commission houses, evicted from Housing Commission and other special housing, especially reserves and rehabilitation centres.
* Aborigines Welfare Board develop experimental housing structures and forms.
* Housing and welfare programmes must be integrated and Aboriginal views considered.
* Families should be assisted toward rehousing in their district; if they wish relocation elsewhere this should be thoroughly explored with them.
* Any special housing by the Aborigines Welfare Board should conform to uniform Building Regulations.
* House purchase at Housing Commission rates and/or on conditions of low repayment or at an uneconomic price should be available to Aborigines.
* All tenants of the Aborigines Welfare Board or Housing Commission houses should pay rent — this being part of the process of learning to accept responsibility.
Also the document makes suggestions regarding:

Allocation of housing in which it suggests that this should be based on needs as assessed by a welfare officer and where the Housing Commission of Victoria is involved, the Housing Commission and welfare officer staff using as criteria:

- adequacy of present housing
- family size
- living standards
- employment
- history of previous opportunities
- likelihood of adjusting to new surroundings.

Rent subsidy is to be based on:

- adapted formula related to income
- family size

and in a range of from $2 - $5.

The housekeeping advisory schemes should be extended beyond that planned for Morwell to include the rest of the state. Limited loans for basic furniture should be made available, repayable on a 25c. per week basis or on a dollar for dollar grant basis. Housing loans to assist Aborigines to purchase homes should also be introduced. In the final full year of its operation 1967 the annual report of the Board recognized that it had become 'a small housing authority'. It also recognized that much of its time and funds had been devoted to the provision of improved housing. The report pointed out that because of its activities the overall pattern of Aboriginal housing had changed. Many families are in good standard homes; no longer are there large shanty towns along the river banks. In the whole of the state there are possibly not more than 12 river bank shacks occupied by Aboriginal families, and some of these are of recent origin. Most of the problems of bad Aboriginal housing are now related to families living in pickers' huts or other rural slums, including dilapidated farm houses and saw mill huts, and to situations where families 'double up' with the recognized tenants in standard accommodation. (p.8.)

It remains for the final chapter to examine the period critically to determine what it is that we have learned from the programmes of the Board. This will be done following an examination of the programmes of the Ministry when the whole picture of government action in this field will have been outlined from the beginning of the process to 1972. More than 130 years of planned intervention by a single government authority in a delimited geographic area can then be considered.

Housing policy and programmes formed the centre of Aborigines Welfare Board activity. While there is some evidence of development toward institutional notions of Welfare in the final policy document, the action of the decade is the provision of residual services. Concepts of normative and comparative need predominate in planning and policy. Felt and expressed needs play only a very minor role. This is congruent with a low comparison level and little evidence of Aboriginal dissatisfaction being openly expressed in public or in Board documents. A lack of systems concepts and thinking, except as these were begun to be developed in the final policy document, is also a facet
of the period and is related to the needs/resources gap which, with hindsight, we know to have been considerable. The discrepancy between manifest and extant aims of the Board, perhaps most spectacularly seen in the area of preparation for change, is also a significant part of the picture of this period.

Overall housing matters consumed much of the time, energy and resources of the Aborigines Welfare Board. Not only was housing important because it is an area of high visibility, but the beliefs of the Board about causality are most visible in the housing programmes. If one believes that people are in such a miserable and depressed state (and they saw the Aboriginal people as being in such a state because of their wretched physical circumstances) then one must proceed to deal with those circumstances. One therefore develops a house acquisition and relocation focus to one's programmes. If, however, one perceives that people sink into such wretched circumstances because of their isolation and cultural anomie, then one is likely to focus on the human resources more than the physical resources. It is the systemically-focused attempt to strike a balance between these which characterizes the next period of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 1968-1972.

SUMMARY OF THE ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD INTERVENTION

The summary that follows will consider the Aborigines Welfare Board intervention in four phases:
1. Contact and assessment
2. Action plan
3. Implementation
4. Termination and evaluation

These four phases are derived from work done by the author on the process of intervention and reported elsewhere.

Contact and Assessment Phase
There is little doubt from Aborigines Welfare Board records and annual reports that the Aborigines Welfare Board saw the people in the situation as Aborigines; individuals and sometimes families. The problem was seen as many individual Aborigines and families poorly housed, unemployed, poorly educated, in poor health, in frequent trouble with the law, drinking excessively, making little effort to change their situation and showing little interest in doing so.

Aborigines Welfare Board perception of the size and structure of the population was excessively limited. In the early stages of the Aborigines Welfare Board only certain aspects of the situation were seen as significant, e.g. housing and sub-standard physical accommodation, unemployment and the lack of income for minimum necessities by Aborigines Welfare Board standards, this also focused attention on social services. Most of the early attention of the Aborigines Welfare Board was focused on individual and family systems. Some attention was focused on local groups on Lake Tyers but mainly for the purpose of identifying people and genealogical ties. White organisations were seen as relevant to the problem situation especially those whose activities involved
raising money for Aborigines, offering holidays, scholarships or whatever. There was virtually no sense of an Aboriginal community in 1958; this did not arise until the early 60's when Diane Barwick and the Superintendent had spent several years collecting genealogical data. Also the problem nature of the situation was seen as fragmentary. There were specific housing crises especially due to the river bank humpy camps; there were primary and some secondary students not attending school regularly and always leaving at fourteen years, the minimum age or earlier. There were itinerants and many people who did not work regularly with all of the economic and other consequences of this.

The Aborigines Welfare Board and its interventive activities was legitimised by Act of Parliament which set up its structure and broadly defined its functions. The McLean report which led to the establishment of the Board also acted as the Aborigines Welfare Board's general guide for the first few years of its activity. The field staff were sometimes professional social workers and sometimes not, during the early period there was one professional social worker and thus some professional legitimisation of activity. The situation was in fact an appropriate one for involving a professional social worker/change agent because the legislation clearly perceived the focus of the Aborigines Welfare Board as on social functioning and was oriented to the individual persons in the situation and their ability to cope. The problem as the government and the Board saw it was that some aspects of the life style of Aborigines especially sub-standard housing, health and social behaviour caused white citizen action and finally government intervention and so it was by government action and choice that contact was instigated and what was defined as a problem was done so in terms established by the government through McLean and the Aborigines Welfare Board.

The question which next arises relates to who is to be seen as the client system. Certainly because of the explicit focus of the McLean Report and because of the person-focused perception of the Aborigines Welfare Board, the individual Aborigines were seen as the primary potential clients and this is supported by the fact that the files were initially made up for each individual Aboriginal adult and filed alphabetically. Some focus on the family as potential client system existed as could be seen from Aborigines Welfare Board attitudes to housing and other programmes and is reflected in the fact that the file of the mother of children contained the file information on the children as well. Even as the Board became aware of the groupings and communities of Aborigines, they did not desire to see these as potential clients — quite the opposite. They constantly worked to separate groupings and settlement communities in the hope that not seeing groups or communities as potential clients would help the individuals function as 'normal' (white) citizens. The Aborigines Welfare Board perception of the problem aspect of the situation included a belief that the effect of other Aborigines on any individual or family receiving help was to discourage the Board's efforts to have them improve themselves. The Aborigines Welfare Board, partly because of the influence of the McLean report, on which a great deal of its perception of the situation was based, and partly because of its perception of the size of the population, seems to have not perceived any organisation as a potential client system. There were, during the early part of the Aborigines Welfare Board era, no Aboriginal organisations and with Aborigines as the
problem focus no reason to perceive non-Aboriginal organisations as potential clients. The Board had no reason to see the society as a whole as a potential client system, after all, its brief by legislation was the Aborigines in Victoria.

At this point, a technical problem arises in the analysis. The Aborigines Welfare Board, perceiving its actions as legitimised by the government, perceived no reason to have them finally legitimised by the Aborigines or any other potential client system. So having identified potential client systems as individual and family systems, the Board proceeded to collect data about these two system levels. Later this was to be extended to regional groupings. This activity was to take many years as would be evident from the size of the task and the limited manpower resources available. In the meantime action was required. The Aborigines Welfare Board scanned ahead for potential target systems relevant to the two levels of potential client system selected. As the outcome goals were being defined by the Board they were known and did not require consideration, i.e. assimilation meaning action to assist Aborigines to become like other Australians so the target systems were the Aboriginal individuals and families in the community.

One of the consequences of not requiring client legitimisation thus appears to be a truncating of the interventive process and a simplification of it. It also means that constraints on negotiating contracts cease to be greatly relevant in so far as client system (now synonymous with target systems) constraints are concerned. From the case file record and the annual reports, it seems likely that the major constraint on implementation during the early period was the lack of motivation of the Aborigines and the lack of suitable manpower resources. No decision about which contracts to negotiate needs to be made but the same process of decision making about the planned intervention is required.

Some consideration was given to certain difficulties at the individual and family level; e.g. who was going to be eligible? How was the Aborigines Welfare Board to be certain that a person or family was Aboriginal? In the early period, this was no problem because the poor social status and the almost total lack of advantage in being an Aborigine made it reasonably safe to accept the statement made by a person. What constituted a family, especially when so many Aboriginal couples with children were not legally married?

Overall, there was a recognition that the need for data on the client/target population was considerable and that there was very little available in 1958.

Action Plan Phase
This aspect of the interventive process considers the activities of the Board toward establishing a contract with the Aborigines individually or collectively to change certain aspects of their situation in agreed ways (it using agreed upon methods).

The Board never undertook this phase because it never saw the need to legitimate intervention through negotiation of contracts with the potential client system (if one
takes the definition given by Boas and Crawley,⁶ they see the client system as that system expected to be the major beneficiary of the outcome of the interventive process. This remains true even if one may wish to argue the Aborigines Welfare Board saw the major beneficiary not as the Aborigines but as the members of the White Australian society who were distressed by the circumstances of the Aborigines they observed. The legislation that established the Aborigines Welfare Board, however, explicitly stated that it was the welfare of the Aborigines that was the responsibility of the Board and with them no negotiations for outcome or method goals took place.

However, whilst interventive policy did not necessitate an explicit contract, nevertheless a form of contractual negotiation went on. Intervention that requires the client or target system to change (unless the change is imposed by authority) will involve some form of agreement between the Aborigines Welfare Board officer and the Aborigines. Thus some kind of decision making process about outcome and method goals is necessarily undertaken prior to action (even if this is not made explicit) if any kind of contract is to be negotiated.

The outcome goals at this level of specificity would appear to be something like:

- to get as many of the families in humpy camp and severely sub-standard accommodation as possible, to apply for Board or Housing Commission of Victoria accommodation and get them to live in this accommodation.
- to have Aboriginal children go to school regularly as white children and to stay at school till the same age as white children.
- to get Aboriginal families to the same state of physical health as other families in the community.
- to get employable Aboriginal people in to regular work and get others on to the social service benefits and pensions to which they were entitled.

The method goals:

- to encourage individuals and families to reach these outcome goals by personal contact, encouragement, exhortation even perhaps by implicit threats.
- to make houses available for rent and encourage the Housing Commission of Victoria to do the same.
- to encourage parents to send their children to school, explain the advantages to them, warn them of the legal consequences of not doing so; even provide some finance to assist parents.
- to make appointments with appropriate medical and para-medical services for Aborigines and even treat them on the spot if possible.
- to encourage employers to take on Aboriginal staff in unskilled jobs and exhort Aborigines to remain in them.

In every case the primary target system is the Aboriginal individual or family where the goal is a change in their status.

To achieve these goals the Board used welfare officers or other Board members or representatives, neighbours, influential individuals (business men or representatives of
service clubs or ministers of religion), financial aid, houses, arrangements made for appointments or travel. The strategies were usually individual ones based on knowledge, control over material resources and legitimate authority. The influence process usually inducement and persuasion (a better quality of life style for the individuals and/or the family for the future) and some use of the environment as well as through the tenuous special relationships built up with the client often over one or more years of intermittent contact. The relationships were rarely collaborative, usually of a bargaining nature (if you move to this new house we will do such and such, or if you take this advice about medical care then we will pay your fare, and . . .) or sometimes of a conflict nature (if you don't move from this sub-standard unit to this new house then you will get no further help or you risk losing your children . . . or if young so and so does not go to school then such and such sanction will be applied). Bargaining was the most frequent process.

Perhaps because client legitimation was ultimately not considered essential, welfare officers and others felt no necessity to carefully check out the acceptability of the proposed arrangements with the Aboriginal individual or family. Or, perhaps because of the limitations of staff time collaborative arrangements and contracts were not seen as feasible during the early years of development of the Aborigines Welfare Board. The Aborigines Welfare Board minutes for the period suggest that the former attitude existed even if the latter was also true. The goals were demonstrably those of the government, the methods were more or less tailored to implement these. Organisational constraints on methods were strong. (The Board refused to discuss the possibility of a 'community development' programme as late as 1965.) The most potent outcome of intervention without client legitimization appears to be in the area of responsibility for the interventive process and here the Aborigines Welfare Board accepted responsibility for the change programme and did not expect the Aborigines to do so. One of the significant consequences of this relates to motivation and sanctions. If the change desired by the Board was not synonymous with that desired by the Aborigines what expectations could the Board have of success unless they could apply some sanctions to the Aborigines. Without the co-operation of the Aborigines which is the persuasive argument for negotiating a contract with them) there are innumerable uncertainties in the outcome of any intervention, especially in a broad-aim social change programme. The Aborigines Welfare Board frequently acted unilaterally and typical of the dilemma which resulted was the rehousing of Lake Tyers families around the state and the escalating rent arrears. When their situation deteriorated, threats of eviction served no purpose, the families could and often did desire to return to a less threatening situation such as a camp where excessive expectations would not be imposed and if the Board applied such a sanction then they were undoing their own work. Frequently tangential sanctions were threatened, e.g. loss of children to the Social Welfare Department, but this too was a double-edged sword and often rebounded on the Board. It could not continue to operate with a closed community if it was reputed to destroy the families it sought to save. Sometimes the Board sought to solve the problem by having the council bulldoze a camp site but public support against official bullying of the underdog again worked for the Aborigines.
Monitoring the effects of the intervention, housing, material aid, health assistance, educational aid, etc. was made difficult by the isolated nature of the aid and limited opportunity to observe indication of behaviour change among the Aborigines due to inadequate manpower on the Board.

As the goals were usually spelled out only in general terms, i.e. to assimilate, the evidence sought by the welfare officer was that the family was fitting in to the pattern of life of the other members of the community or that the individual was responding to help in the same way a well-socialized white would do. There was some evidence from individuals in the short term that supported the welfare officer in a perception that the Aboriginal individual or family was ‘fitting in’ however, there was more depressing evidence and more obvious cases where they were not and/or where an apparent success in the short term was failing in the longer term; e.g. a family that seemed to be succeeding suddenly became visible in a crisis as failing, having had debts and problems that had been covered up; or a child who had been going to school suddenly left and it was found that attendance had been steadily dropping off; or a person who, even if they attended the last appointment, did nothing more till the next appointment and arrangements were made.

Thus the Action Plan phase for the Aborigines Welfare Board was not a period of explicit contract negotiation even with the specific individuals selected for help by the Board. Here also the implication of the Aborigines Welfare Board’s perception of the situation effected the nature of the goals and methods selected. The perception of each Aboriginal individual or family as a ‘poor white’ to be assisted as an isolated unit had serious limiting effects on the plans made.

Implementation Phase

This phase of the intervention process usually begins when a contract specifying outcome goals and methods has been negotiated and ends when the goals have been met or it has become apparent that they will not be. Also this aspect of intervention begins by bringing the Action System into existence or operation. For us the Aborigines Welfare Board was on the whole its own Action System. The Action System was usually comprised of Aborigines Welfare Board staff both welfare and administrative, whose task was to establish and organize the needed resource, house, food voucher, hospital appointment, school clothing order, and then ensure that the Aboriginal family was placed in a suitable relationship to the resource, be it material, personal, or whatever. Because there was no necessity to contract usually the Action Phase and the Implementation Phase merged together with a minimum of technical and a considerable amount of administrative activity. For a more detailed account of this phase and its specific characteristics see Boas and Crawley. 

It is clear in retrospect that there existed generally inadequate monitoring of all programmes. Also it should be noted that the monitoring was being carried on at two levels. The staff were responding to the negative aspects of the programme from their day to day perceptions and the members of the Board were responding to the more favourable comments that they got from their infrequent incursions into various areas of the state. Thus to some extent the selective perception of the two non-integrated units of the Aborigines Welfare Board created considerable confusion about what was
the state of affairs (similar experiences were reported in 1835.) Worse than this was the organizational dissention between the various parts of the Action System (field staff vs. administrative staff). Opposing factions on the Board supported the values of one side or the other which resulted in defensive hostility inside the organization which had the effect of exacerbating the confusion still further. The value system of the administrative staff and some Board members was that Aborigines were 'no-hopers', irresponsible, often undeserving, much like the attitudes of the early 20th and late 19th century charity organizations. They made the judgments against a perception of a reasonably motivated working or middle class white Australian model and it was against that framework, not a bizarre judgment. The other faction in the organization saw Aborigines as the victims of national discrimination and prejudice, victims of their own culture and of a history that they could not control. This group felt that compensatory aid had to be poured into this community to give it a chance and felt frustrated at the slowness and the ineffectiveness of their own actions.

As the Board moved into the mid 1960's this group began to agitate politically both inside and outside the organization to change the structure and dispose of the Board, and the policy document they initiated and wrote was a major factor in their ultimate destruction of the Aborigines Welfare Board.

The process of programme adjustment was seriously inhibited as a result of the confused and often conflicting monitoring and feedback. The other significant aspect that is visible in the processes of the Aborigines Welfare Board is the differing and often conflicting objectives of the personnel. This was made possible by the very vague unspecific nature of the assimilation goals of the Aborigines Welfare Board. Also the manifest goal was to help Aborigines to adjust to the changes whilst the extant goal was to expect them to cope once shown how.

With two different and non-congruent value stances inconsistencies arose between policy decisions and implementation, things undertaken one month were reversed the next, e.g. retention or disposal of Lake Tyers; whether a family would get the Housing Commission of Victoria rent arrears paid or not; promise of help revoked, and many others. Frequently two families living close together were treated differently in respect to assistance sought because one was in favour with or had access to the powerful fraction in the organization at the time.

Ex-post-facto the action system can be seen as comprised mainly of the Aborigines Welfare Board staff with a limited number of negotiated arrangements with other state and commonwealth government departments and with some part-time rent collectors. All method goals being based on individual or family level contact.

However, because all activity was at the individual or family level and because the superintendent was a trained anthropologist the Aborigines Welfare Board continued to collect and document genealogical details for every family or individual it came across. The cumulative effect of this was a growing awareness of the actual size of the population and with this, an understanding that the resources of the Aborigines Welfare Board were hopelessly inadequate to meet the needs of the large and growing population.
Termination and Evaluation Phase
Termination usually occurs because the organization controlling the change and the client monitoring the changes perceive that the goals have been met or that cost/benefit wise nothing will be gained by proceeding further. Termination means the cessation of the relationship between the change organization and the person/s or organization being changed, the change organization and the client, the change organization and the worker, and the shutting down (or winding up) of the change process. Evaluation requires determination as to the extent to which the goals were reached and then an appraisal of the total interventive process that resulted from the presenting situation.

With the Aborigines Welfare Board the termination process was in fact a major organizational change. Pressure from some members of the Aborigines Welfare Board, from some welfare staff and from some ex-welfare staff finally led the government to enact new legislation. The Aborigines Welfare Board had been, in some respects, effectively monitoring its own progress, had realized the weakness of the Aborigines Welfare Board organizational structure, perceived the increasingly visible gap between the size of the problem and the extent of its resources, and thus, finally took the steps, (beginning with the major policy document) which led to the Board recommending to the Minister that it be terminated. Because of the continuing nature of the government acceptance of responsibility for action relating to Aborigines no cessation of the Vic. Govt./Aborigines relationship was deemed necessary and the continual operation of the Aborigines Welfare Board until the new Ministry commenced operation ensured that termination need have no catastrophic or even major effects on the Aboriginal people.

Even in retrospect, an analysis of the Aborigines Welfare Board intervention with respect to its achievement of its goal is not easy. The Board was charged with the welfare of Victorian Aborigines and with advancing them toward assimilation. To some extent they were successful. They housed some people, they helped to provide some educational opportunities. They widened the experience of some young people by supporting holiday schemes, they helped many people travel more extensively and get specialized medical and dental help. They became aware of the extensive employment problems. They tried overall to help at a family level with material aid and they made some impact on a number of people. They clearly failed in their overall attempt to achieve assimilation but that process was proceeding apace and they played their part in it.

They provided data for the future and left the Ministry a not unimpressive policy document which outlined in principle a framework which would enable those who followed to avoid the more obvious policy misjudgments of the past. They also left behind a data bank of information of the Victorian Aboriginal population that was to enable the Ministry to avoid the problem of under-estimating the number of people in this population for whom programmes would be needed.

In terms of evaluation of the intervention programme, of the Board’s analysis of the presenting situation and its response to this. It made some decisions for which it was to be severely criticised in the future. It certainly failed in retrospect to undertake an adequate comprehensive analysis of the situation such as appears necessary in a complex social problem. However, by the time its decade of interventive activity was up it had
shown many things: that the needs/resources gap was of a magnitude not contemplated in 1958; that the structures previously estimated for the administration of Aboriginal affairs viz. ‘Boards’ appeared not to be administratively practical; that certain limited interventive processes were ineffective for major broad-aim change; that the perspective of a ‘poor white’ group was inappropriate and failed to take account of a real ‘community’ which existed throughout the state; that there were major ‘groups’ that influenced much of the activity patterns, values, and beliefs on which members of the Aboriginal community functioned; that the work at the micro level provided data for analysis of the situation at the macro level. Perhaps a necessary stage?

It seems reasonably clear that in its early stages the Aborigines Welfare Board made no serious efforts to fully analyse the situation. (It is also probable that such an analysis would have been costly and very difficult if not impractical). The Aborigines Welfare Board was confronted with continuous individual crises of a political nature, the result of local dissatisfaction with conditions and felt under pressure to act, first. Considering the lack of prior action and the extent of visible poverty and physical inequality it hardly seemed either necessary or appropriate to begin its existence with a study — that had, in any case, been done by McLean. In the light of this it seems inappropriate to heap criticism or condemnation on the actions that were undertaken. In retrospect it is more reasonable to see the Aborigines Welfare Board as providing a crude, micro interventive, band-aid, material aid, contact and assessment phase, for a long-term, broad-aim, social change programme.

In the final chapter some of the conclusions drawn from this experience and some of the implications for social intervention will be considered a little further.

End Notes — Chapter 5
1. As a large number of quotations have been drawn from Aborigines Welfare Board Annual Reports, I have for ease of reading cited the references more fully in the text.
3. A vivid and direct statement toward dissimilar cultural forms.
4. Note the use of the term part-Aboriginal has been dropped.
5. A purely technical/professional issue should be noted here. In fact, no-one saw Aborigines as CLIENTS or even POTENTIAL CLIENTS. No-one desired to establish contracts with them as the beneficiary. The government wished to legitimize intervention and have Aborigines as Target Systems. They wanted Aborigines adjusted and changed so as to make them like European middle class people.
CHAPTER 6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE 1968-1972 (THE MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS)

INTERVENTION: 1968-1972

This chapter begins by examining the nature of the change from the Board to the Ministry. A number of significant elements make up the central issues which constitute the very nature of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and distinguish it from previous structures and programmes. When these notions have been discussed examples from Housing, Education and Health programmes will illustrate Ministry actions.

STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL CHANGES

Aborigines Welfare Board — Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs emerged out of the demise of the Aborigines Welfare Board. The Board held its final meeting, new enabling legislation was passed through parliament, and until the first Director was appointed in April, 1968, the ex-Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare continued to administer the Department. The Board had been constrained by inappropriate structure, lack of power and autonomy. The Ministry was not. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was a separate department. Its permanent head was the Director of Aboriginal Affairs, appointed by Cabinet and responsible to his own minister (the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs). The Ministry had its own complete staff, handled its own budget and accounting as well as its own administration. Its powers were summed up adequately in its first Progress Report on 30 June 1968:

The function of the Ministry is ‘to promote the social and economic advancement of Aborigines’.

The Act provided for the creation of an advisory council of thirteen members with the Director as Chairman. At least three members had to be Aborigines. The function of the Council was to act in an advisory capacity to the Minister, and not perform any executive role.

The Ministry was given wide powers to promote the interests of Aborigines, covering educational assistance, housing, use and development of reserves, training, economic development programmes, co-ordination of voluntary organizations, public information and research.

(The number of Aborigines and the method of constituting the advisory council was to undergo dramatic change during the subsequent three years, however, its potency was to remain unimpaired.)

Numbers, the Census, Implications for Establishing a Needs/Resources Mix
The first and only Director of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was Mr. Morris Reginald Worthy, a professional social worker. The first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was Mr. M. R. Meagher, MP, Minister for Housing, Forests and Aboriginal Affairs. This situation of a minister with multiple portfolios enabled the new Director to exercise an
extraordinary degree of freedom and autonomy of operation that was to prove important in the success of his department's operations.

Whereas the Aborigines Welfare Board began in 1958 with a belief that the Aboriginal population was about 1,500, when it was, in fact, somewhat in excess of 7,000, the Ministry began in 1968 with an assumption of numbers around 5,000\(^1\). This meant that the planning for and by the Ministry was based on more realistic data.

At the time this study began, Aborigines were counted in the census if they had a certain percentage of Aboriginal blood. The Constitution in Section 127 has, since 1901, inhibited an accurate census of Aborigines because the Section stated that:

‘In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other parts of the Commonwealth, Aboriginal natives shall not be counted.’

This section of the Constitution was repealed by referendum on 27th May, 1967. However, the figures for Victoria for 1966 were based on the previous arrangements and the census question stated:

State each person's race. For persons of European race, wherever born, write 'European'. Otherwise state whether Aboriginal, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, etc., as the case may be. If of more than one race give particulars, for example, ½ European - ½ Aboriginal - % Aboriginal - % Chinese . . . .

Any person of more than ½ European ancestry was defined as European and thus the figure from that census for Victoria of 1966, or even the corrected and revised 1966 estimate made by Jones\(^2\) of 2,151, was a hopeless underestimate. As a result, in 1969 when the question arose of finding a base on which to calculate for future planning, a basis on which to estimate probable future requirements, the census data were of no use. After a detailed and thorough examination of the records of the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, I believed that a census-type count could be made by the sole use of the data contained in the files of the Ministry and set about preparing that data for a computer listing and tabulation that would coincide with the 1971 census, and which would in advance of that provide some basis for considering the real dimensions of the population in Victoria. The first printout was compiled for June 1970. That was subjected to as rigorous a check for errors as was possible, and a final rerun was made with the data updated to June 1971. This was used for planning and estimating the future needs, and as writing for the first draft of this study began the figures from the 1971 national census initial printout became available. (That was approximately mid-1973).

For the purpose of the study the tabulations will not be used although they are of themselves informative and interesting. For this study they were significant for one or two reasons. In planning for broad-spectrum or broad-aim programmes, it is essential to have a clear idea of the dimensions of the population. The following figures show that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was in fact able to plan on sound data:
The persistent data collecting processes of the Aborigines Welfare Board paid dividends for the programmes of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. They were, in a sense, a necessary precondition to the development of the more wide-ranging programmes of the Ministry. The lack of accurate, compiled data was one of the factors inhibiting the development of Aborigines Welfare Board programmes. If the size of the situation to be handled is under-estimated then the size of the resources likely to be made available to deal with the situation will probably also be under-estimated and thus inadequate. Other factors are related to the size of the population. Staff establishment more than doubled from 1968 when the Board figure was 33 to 1969 when the Ministry figure was 67. More staff meant more likelihood of locating and working with more Aborigines and also more back up administrative staff.

The Ministry also developed effectively the use of an interventional technique to extend its knowledge not only of gross numbers but of numbers of people with needs requiring resources. Expressed needs, if specific enough, enable budget planning. The Ministry established a series of action programmes from its knowledge of the comparative needs and from the felt needs stated by various Aboriginal groups. Thus the housing grants programme generated a stream of data, both numerical and economic, related to home purchase requirements. The house rental programme provided similar data about persons requiring rental housing; the pre-school bursary scheme provided data about numbers of pre-school children, and so on. Thus, the more comprehensive the programmes offered the more comprehensive the data available from monitoring applications for aid or involvement in them. This process of using comparative, felt and expressed needs to develop monitoring and planning data enabled the Ministry to realistically close in on the needs/resources gap.

The Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs
The creation of the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs (C.O.A.A.) simultaneously with the establishment of the Ministry in Victoria provided further necessary impetus to the new Ministry to be innovative and expansive. The political climate was right for change and new ideas; economically there was plenty of finance available and the public wanted action. Staff could be attracted. The C.O.A.A. was both a stimulant to state programmes, a spur to state innovative development and a sanction for expansion and experimentation.

EQUALITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS (CONCEPTUAL AND PRACTICAL CHANGES)

The Director of the new Ministry focussed the organization's policy in a new direction. Instead of attending to either specific or general problems the central concern of the Ministry was directed to implementing the single notion of Equality.
Equality became the 'ideal' toward which all action programmes were focussed. Yet, it is clear that such 'ideals' had been expressed in policy documents on many previous occasions. Talking about equality is clearly separate from acting in such a manner as to ensure that the outcome of one's actions is increased opportunity for equality. What separated the Ministry's use of the concept from previous discussion about equality were its actions. The Ministry possessed the necessary resources and innovative stimulus. A number of illustrations in housing, education and health will be cited later in the chapter. It was not just a question of goals but political support to deal with the fact of rent arrears, the disputes, so that the policy was not subverted. It is possible to fail because of a lack of skill. It is possible to fail because policy is unsound. It is possible to fail because there exists a conflict of interests and groups can use a contentious area, a particular unpleasant event over which they can create unpopularity by attracting attention to a particular unsavoury circumstance. By such means a policy can be subverted because it can lose political support or favour and thus lose 'legitimacy'. (Especially if legitimacy rests in the organization and not with the consumers of the service.) It is in the practical skilled handling of such difficult circumstances that a policy of equality is given meaning and life and from which the professional social work intervenor gathers extensive data, much of which is very difficult to clarify and transmit. Yet it was in the implementation of the notion of equality that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs made its most singular contribution.

The Total Community: Aborigines and Non-Aborigines
The concept of equality implies two parties. It was perceived as essential that if Aborigines were to obtain some evident equality (assuming that there were to be indicators against which such a normative concept could be measured and it will be shown that there were) then it was necessary to work with Aborigines to assist them to move in the desired direction. It was also necessary to work with non-Aborigines so that efforts by Aborigines to interact with the social system in new ways would not meet unnecessary barriers of ignorance or prejudice. The development of sophisticated or merely novel programmes was likely to be inhibited if the media were antagonistic, if there was no public support (to bolster legitimacy) to ensure continued funding, if persons living in contact with Aborigines were to reject their efforts to change. Thus for Aborigines this meant structural programmes requiring material opportunities for health, housing, education, employment, etc., and functional programmes, that is field staff personal contact, to reduce the tensions and conflicts created by the new structured initiatives. For non-Aborigines it meant education and involvement in the goals of the programmes.

Time-Limited Projects
An essential element of the concept of equality relates to the non-existence of permanent or even long-term discriminatory programmes, even positively discriminating ones. From the beginning, the Ministry stated in the Press through its official statements its belief that it should cease to exist in twenty years. It appears to have remained true to this philosophy throughout its lifetime. The Ministry wanted Aborigines to be able to cope better; to do so required compensatory programmes. These needed to be time-limited unless they were to establish a new and perhaps more insidious (because more
subtle) dependency. There were in fact a number of ‘compensatory’ programmes commenced (educational incentive scholarships, pre-school support, low-cost home purchase and many others) that would have been beneficial to the non-Aboriginal community. The Ministry saw its responsibility as being to demonstrate their value and lend support to groups wishing to establish these for all. However, where such groups were not successful the Ministry believed that the ‘booster’ (short-term) projects should end when they had achieved, at least their minimal objectives. This frequently meant acting in ways that were unpopular, for example raising low rents to the level of other Housing Commission tenants. The Ministry’s Director, stated on several occasions that the Ministry’s function was not to win a popularity poll.

Objectives: Matching Distributions, Consistency and Congruence in the Programme
Equality as an operational goal was most clearly perceived by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as that situation where the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal distributions on any specifiable indicator were either insignificantly different or where the amount of cost necessary to shift the distributions closer together was grossly disproportional to the advantages to be gained from so doing. Some indicators, such as percentage attendance at school, were easily quantifiable and subject to direct statistical processes. Others were not and when no clear concise indicator could be described or where the measurement of an indicator would have been excessively difficult, a qualitative equivalent was used and a non-quantitative appraisal made by the best available methods. For example, when was the visiting nurse no longer required because families were making as ‘adequate’ (equal) use of medical facilities as non-Aboriginal families?

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs clearly indicated that its task was to undertake projects that would be completed when Aborigines were coping as adequately as non-Aborigines. It also recognized, however, that to reach the point when a function could be handed over to the normal government department special compensatory programmes were necessary. The danger in by-passing this phase of development was seen as failing to establish a policy that applied to Aborigines consistently in each area of life. Thus while Aborigines were being involved in the normal processes of the community to reach equality, it was seen as important that they were not treated incongruently. The housing programme and philosophy needed to be consistent with the health, education and other programmes and this could not be easily ensured without a single responsible policy-setting functional department.

Another aspect of equality related to congruence and consistency was that programmes developed should take account of the whole life cycle. If a project for children was inconsistent with one established for adults then development to equality could be expected to be retarded.

Aboriginal Responsibility and Accountability
The Ministry saw equality for Aborigines as meaning equal in regard to responsibility for their actions and equally accountable to the community for their behaviour. Thus equality had its disadvantageous aspects. The consequence of this view was, for example, that Aborigines in rented housing were clearly informed of their responsibility to their rental commitments. When they failed to do so they were subject to the same liability to
eviction as non-Aborigines would have been. In fact the personal counselling programme allowed the eviction process to be carried out over an extended time period and with considerable educational value. The consequence was relatively little necessity to apply ultimate sanctions.

An illustration of the departmental application of equality of accountability can be seen when an Aboriginal child fails to attend school. The Ministry expressed its belief that the parents of these children should be subject to the same legal sanctions as other parents, otherwise (as had frequently been the case in the past) the Ministry argued Aboriginal parents' non-compliance with this requirement reinforced their unequal status. While the Board had sanctioned this situation in its efforts to be helpful and encouraging, its effect appeared to be the opposite of its intended outcome. The Ministry claimed that this process made Aborigines different from other citizens and therefore unequal.

**BROAD-SPECTRUM INTERVENTION (THE MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS MODEL)**

The years 1969-1972 were exciting years in terms of Aboriginal Affairs programmes. A whole new interventive system was being developed and tested and while it did not ultimately solve all the problems of the time, as we thought it would, the process taught us much about the nature of planning and implementing broad-spectrum (broad-aim) intervention programmes.

The Ministry embarked on a broad-spectrum (broad-aim) intervention programme. This reflects an awareness which was simply this: For change to be effective and long-lasting, it must penetrate into every area of Aboriginal life and it must influence Aborigines in every area of the state. In effect, it was an awareness that life is not carried on in a vacuum. Very generally stated, it means that it is not enough for Aborigines to change if non-Aborigines do not change to accept them and vice versa. It means that it is no good changing educational opportunity for children if their parents or grandparents do not reinforce and support the values involved in education. It means that it is not enough to offer housing opportunities for people in one area if their relatives from another are going to crowd in and undermine their developing aspirations for a better quality of life. It means that there is no point in educating young people if they cannot obtain better quality, better paid and more satisfying work as a result. It means that the integrity of a culture or sub-culture must be maintained; that change within any group must be consistent, its direction must be visible, its advantages available to those who change, and its outcome desirable to those who are being asked or helped to change. There must be support for those who are changing to continue to do so and there must be incentive to change which is acceptable to those involved.

The implementation of broad-spectrum intervention programmes is through a multitude of short-term intervention projects. Some of those implemented by the Ministry between 1968 and 1972 give an idea of the range of projects used to support this philosophy.
Housing Programmes
House Rental Project
House Purchase Project — $1500 and $9000 grants
Units for Elderly People
Housing Commission Housing Project
Settlement Rebuilding Programme
Urban Rental Support Project
Hostel Accommodation for young people and workers
Family Group Home Project
Aboriginal Elderly Persons Housing Trust

Education Programmes
Pre-school bursary
Pre-school advisory home visiting project
Pre-school research — Van Leer Project
Primary school education — Aborigines Education Incentive Scholarship Fund
(A.E.I.S.F.)
Primary school book and fee and uniform allowance
Primary school research — Australian Council for Educational Research project
(A.C.E.R.)
Primary school tutorial project
Secondary school scholarship — A.E.I.S.F.
Secondary school clothing, book and fee allowance
Commonwealth Secondary Grant Scheme
Commonwealth post-primary study grants scheme

Health Programmes
Immunization projects
Visiting nurse projects
— infant welfare centre and child care
— pre and post-natal care education
— use of community medical and para-medical services
TB projects
Health research projects
Home health projects

Employment Programmes
Commonwealth Employment training schemes
Vocational training projects
Experimental vocational guidance project
Special Works project
Commonwealth Viable Enterprises
Aboriginal staff employment project
Special projects supporting Aboriginal enterprises
Aboriginal Communication and Participation Programmes
State-wide consultation projects
State-wide Aboriginal newsletter
Area Aboriginal newsletters
Projects supporting Aboriginal voluntary organizations
Special camping projects for youth, older people, individuals and families
Development of area community centres
Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Council

Public Information Programmes
Royal Melbourne Show projects
Displays, brochures and audio-visuals
Public addresses and speakers
Meetings and seminars with the public and special interest groups
Public relations through press releases and news stories
Literature for schools and clubs

Counselling Programmes
A state-wide counselling, casework and group work programme

Settlements Programmes
Land ownership
Community development projects

Sport Programmes
Aboriginal sports Foundation
Support for Aboriginal sporting ventures locally

Legal Programmes
Projects ensuring legal representation
Special Aboriginal Legal Service

These fifty or more specific intervention projects are identified to give some idea of the breadth of activity involved in the total concept of the broad-spectrum intervention programme and many of these will be discussed in future articles.

As well as an awareness the concept of broad-spectrum (broad-aim) intervention programmes reflects the concern that whenever Ministry projects were implemented they should be consistent with the announced philosophy of change and should help the recipients to cope more effectively on their own than had previously been the case.

It is inherent in the nature of thinking for this type of programme activity that broad interventive objectives should be paramount. It is of no value having a fine phrase and a good idea for the overall situation if there is no link between that and the group or area where individuals have contact with the intervention team or organisation. In fact a number of action projects of two types were used:
1. Continuous projects; that is those expected to be necessary for in excess of 5 years (perhaps two or more decades); and
2. Those whose objects were short-term and which I have labelled short-term booster projects.

These two concepts were at the base of the intervention technology used. There appear to be at least twelve issues that need consideration when implementing short term projects. The short term project is above all a manageable administrative unit. Its philosophy is congruent to that of the overall programme and it supplies the bricks and mortar from which the broad-spectrum programme is constructed. Some of the essential elements to consider in planning short term projects are:

1. The framework within which the problem situation rests should be specified:
   (a) what is the nature of the situation if it is seen as a problem, by whom and for what reason and why now?
   (b) what is the history of the problem and any previous attempts to deal with it or related problems? (So that its relationship to the whole can be perceived.)
   (c) what are the characteristics of the population involved?
   (d) which life areas are affected and what knowledge is there of the inter-relation of these with other issues affecting the population?

2. The relationship of the project to other projects in process and planned needs to be considered for the same reasons.

3. The reason for intervening should be clearly specified, and the rationale for timing of the programme stated, so that if it fails to meet its objectives the defective areas of the project can be avoided in future project plans.

4. Such projects require clear and specific performance goals and must be goal-oriented. Expected short and long-term outcomes need to be stated. This allows a certain degree of reliability testing to occur, especially testing of internal consistencies.

5. The duration of the project should be estimated as accurately as possible in the planning and early stages so that staff and clients can plan realistically for the future.

6. The range of intervention techniques should be thought through as far as practicable in advance. The assumptions underlying the project should be stated, as should the rationale for the methods selected. This will allow staff and clients, if they are involved, to base their criticisms on meaningful information and not on erroneous assumptions, and should ensure that staff working on the project have similar understandings and so deal appropriately with situations which may arise and which have not been planned for in advance.

7. Budgets need to be estimated realistically and fund sources for the period assured in order to introduce a sense of realism.
8. Anticipated side-effects need to be noted and considered to allow for planning or handling contingencies.

9. The degree of involvement and the method to be used in involvement of the clients needs to be decided so that planning and publicity can be undertaken when and as appropriate.

10. The possible methods of terminating the project should be stated so as to ensure that participants and staff understand their involvement and the extent of their commitment.

11. Alternative methods should be considered as they may be needed.

12. The effects of the programme on other institutions, organizations and areas in the social structure should be considered. This will provide awareness of areas where administrative action might be used to elicit cooperation and support, instead of misunderstanding and conflict.

The whole programme required social work knowledge and skill in every area of social work practice: skilled individual work, work with groups and with communities (both community development and community organization), work in social planning, social administration and social work research.

Because of the range of programmes undertaken during the period it is impractical to deal with all of them. The character and interventive machinery and the dilemmas will be made visible through some illustrative descriptions of the health and education programmes and through a more detailed discussion of the housing programme. Other aspects will be raised, but the dilemmas, compromises, values and principles on which these were based can be clearly perceived from these few areas.

HOUSING (DATA ON POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES)

At the end of the period of the Aborigines Welfare Board administration a beginning had been made, some of the possibilities and difficulties were better understood and there were numerous aspects of Aboriginal housing that remained unsatisfactory. Considerable rental arrears had amassed, no system existed to deal with the problem, so no policy had been formulated. Limited staff and the rather fragmented nature of the Board's administrative structure had contributed to there being no complete records of people requiring Housing Commission, Board or other housing. There was no clear procedure for applying for rental housing. The situation of Aboriginal housing throughout the state was not known in detail. The number and location of sub-standard dwellings was not known. There were no special provisions to assist Aborigines to become home owners and consequently no data about those who might be willing or able to do so. There were numerous sub-standard dwellings owned by the Board, including settlement houses. There was extensive overcrowding in rental houses and serious problems of household management that had not been faced or resolved.
The maintenance on Board houses was high, the expansion of the home rental programme would increase this problem and the new Ministry had to face the administrative and organization problems of being a landlord and becoming a major government housing authority. There were numerous other problems that required attention when the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs took over. Some of them will be examined. Some were resolved satisfactorily many were not.

Estimating Needs — Numerical Data
There was a range of problems in housing, some of which the Ministry did not manage to resolve during this period. The phenomena of significance is that the issues which had not been aired previously were now more openly discussed.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was not aware of exactly how many Aborigines were housed around the state; they did not know what sort of housing these families were in, nor how many needed accommodation. Thus at least twice during the early years of the Ministry an intensive (but still incomplete) survey was undertaken to locate and identify the housing situation of Aborigines in Victoria. I found in the first survey, undertaken by the field staff over a period of 90 days, and completed in June 1971, that the Ministry could account for 609 dwellings housing Aborigines and a year later a similar survey carried out in the same manner was able to account for 685 dwellings occupied by Aboriginal families. Even the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs lacked adequate staff and facilities to carry out this type of survey with any degree of completeness. Of these 216 were rented from the Housing Commission of Victoria, 148 were privately rented and 140 were rented from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. (See Table 12, Appendix D)

Part of the census data included a house count of 1,195 houses for a population of 5,435. For 810 people the area and housing details were unknown. Thus, 1,195 related to 5,435 of the 6,245 and it was possible to establish a density per house or dwelling of approximately 4.5 people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburbs or Towns</th>
<th>Houses</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Density (persons per dwelling)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Metropolitan</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Valley</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>1356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Gippsland</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Wimmera</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallee</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Total</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>5435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area not known</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>6245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 13
Population Density (Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs Census Data 1971)
At the same time the survey was carried out staff were asked to locate any unhoused families as well. The 1972 total showed in the order of 120 families and individuals living doubled up in accommodation and 48 itinerant individuals and families. Table 14 expresses this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhoused families living with other families</th>
<th>Itinerant males, females, families</th>
<th>Hotel or Boarding House</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 14
Composite Estimate Late 1972-73 of Number of Families Living with other Families and Itinerant Unhoused Families and Individuals

The method of collecting the data varied from one member of the field staff to another, but in every case there were, families in the geographic area in which the field staff members worked, that were not known to the staff member, or, with whom he or she had no contact. In consequence the figures supplied were at best a minimum relevant to the contact patterns of staff at the time.

When the computer data was assembled this provided a stimulus to go back and re-examine the data available from field staff and Table 15 was compiled. It shows the closest figure that could be obtained of the real situation of housing of Victorian Aboriginal people. These figures then show some of the very real problems faced by a reasonably progressive administration and some of the real difficulty of planning. The search for clarification of the housing situation, however, does not stop at this point.

The next area of difficulty for policy planning relates to the question of needs. What were the needs for housing of the Victorian Aboriginal population?

Rental Housing — Needs and Resources
The question of establishing need has been a vexed one for planners. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs used a method of establishing expressed need that has been discussed briefly. To resolve the problem of how many people need what sort of housing the Ministry established waiting lists for the various types of housing that it could offer and that it could reasonably expect the Aboriginal community to desire and which the Aboriginal people had said in various forms of consultation used by the Ministry that they required. Housing Commission of Victoria rental housing applications were no longer available as a source of data because the Housing Commission had very reasonably and rationally desisted from keeping on their application form any data on the Aboriginality of the applicant! One consequence of this apparently enlightened non-discriminative procedure, however, is that individual officers of the Housing Commission of Victoria could apply discriminative practice without visibility. This suggests that overt acknowledgment of discriminative possibilities may be a more effective procedure than pretending that discrimination does not exist. From field staff knowledge, however, there were in the order of less than 100 and more than 50 applicants for Housing Commission homes during the 1971-72 financial year. The Ministry had used a number of methods of obtaining applications from Aborigines for Ministry housing, but because
### TABLE 15
Composite Estimate Late 1971-72 of Housing Situation of Victorian Aboriginal Population compiled from Census Survey Data, Housing Application, Field Staff Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humphies shanties sub-std. caravans tents</th>
<th>Details of type of housing not known but existing in area</th>
<th>Provided by employer</th>
<th>HCV rental</th>
<th>HCV purchase</th>
<th>MAA rental</th>
<th>MAA purchase</th>
<th>Private rental</th>
<th>Private owned</th>
<th>Private purchase Dep. Fin.</th>
<th>Private purchase MAA fin.</th>
<th>V.E. purchase</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the number of houses that could be made available each year was strictly limited to twenty or so, applicants were encouraged to apply for regular Housing Commission accommodation and the remaining applicants were therefore on the whole people who expected to have or already had had difficulty in being accepted for Housing Commission of Victoria rental accommodation, or people who lived or wished to live in areas where the Housing Commission did not plan to provide housing for rental or purchase in the near future. The most reliable estimate of the number of people requiring Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs housing was made for the 1971-72 budget estimates in March/April 1971 and this estimate showed 76 identifiable families in need of rental housing from the Ministry, of whom approximately 26 were in urgent need of housing due to the severely sub-standard conditions in which they were presently living or to the severe overcrowding they were causing other families. From this data and the fact that the estimated average cost of a house acquisition by the Ministry at the time was $11,250 the Ministry would appear to have been able to deal with the expressed need for Ministry rental housing by the expenditure of about $888,750. Compare this figure with the approximately $300,000 allocated each year for rental housing. Still, it would appear from the data that the need for rental accommodation should have been able to be satisfied somewhere around 1975 at the rate operative in 1971-72. That this was clearly not going to be the case suggests that the real numbers were being depressed. But rental housing was only one aspect of the perceived need. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs recognised that there was a pressing need for Aborigines to become home owners with a very real stake in the communities in which they lived. An issue raised in the final policy document of the Aborigines Welfare Board.

Home Ownership
Home ownership is a very potent facet of life in this country and if Aborigines are to become part of that way of life then they must have access to the facilities and finance to become home owners. Thus on the 22nd April, 1969, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs announced a programme of Housing Grants to enable Aboriginal people to purchase their own homes. The proposal was designed to try and take account of the disadvantage that people on settlements were believed to suffer as a result of their rather destructive experiences under previous administrations. Thus a grant of $9,000 would be available to people resident on Lake Tyers and Framlingham settlements, that is, those who were resident there on the 1st January, 1969. This offer closed when the Aboriginal Lands Act 1970 came into force on the 1st July, 1971, at which time the residents of the settlements acquired ownership of their lands and the houses on them.

Grants of $1500 were available to the remainder of the Aboriginal community, and Section 26. J. of the Aboriginal Affairs Act 1957 was amended in October, 1969, to empower the making of grants instead of just loans ‘to enable Aborigines to purchase or otherwise acquire lands or buildings’. It was decided to set a residency criterion in order to provide some time limitations on eligibility. There were two reasons for this: the first related to budget planning and the second to the expediency of discouraging Aborigines from interstate moving over the border in order to make use of the service available in the State of Victoria but not in
their own, a difficulty that was created by the existence of separate state authorities with differing policies and programmes. 1 January, 1969, that is, the date of the official commencement of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, was selected as the date for entitlement if a person was living in Victoria at that date. The decision was made to make the grants solely on the basis of ability to use them and the waiting lists were kept strictly in chronological order and where an applicant could not obtain sufficient bridging finance to use the grant it was decided to make a Ministry loan available. After the first year it became apparent that this practice, in effect, reduced the number of grants that could be made and sizeable loans were discouraged; families seeking them were helped to locate outside sources of finance where possible.

To obtain the following data on the scheme I subjected the total scheme to detailed annual study, using the system set up to cope with the grants, including the continuous register, and this was then checked against the budget/account data, the case records and the subject files. Results in 1972 showed that 70 people had received grants and, in some cases, loans at this time. As a measure of need there were 314 applications current since the commencement of the scheme.

At the time 22% had received grants  
a further 34% had been approved or were under way  
17% of those assessed had not been approved  
19% were still awaiting assessment.

It was interesting that 40% of applicants came from the Metropolitan area and 33% of the grants had been made to that area. The proportion of the grants requested closely followed the population distribution shown on the computer count and adjusted for socio-economic factors. The average rate of applications remained at ten per month since the scheme began and approximately $50,000 had been paid out in grants and $171,000 in loans, that is seventy grants and thirty-five loans.

Only 1 of the 6 x $9,000 grants had failed  
Only 2 of the 64 x $1,500 grants had failed  
25 of the 35 loans had a weekly repayment below $10  
1 only was above $14  
25 or 71% of loan repayments were satisfactory  
10 were in arrears from $110-$1,000 where people were in financial difficulty  
60% used the grant to purchase a private house

It is interesting also to note that 56% began their first house purchase with the grant; the remainder were already purchasing or owned clear title. The grants were considered to be a grant of right, so if a person owned a house he was entitled to the grant if he intended to use it to renovate or improve his home. The grant money remained the property of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs until the loan on the house had been paid off.

The average value range of the houses purchased by the grants was between $8,000 and $13,000, which were reasonable middle-income houses at the time. The weekly income of purchasers shows that 60% earned less than $50 per week, 96% earned less than $100 per week, so the grants were paid to and assisted low income earners
with home purchase or improvements as they were intended to. 63% of recipients of the grants were in the age range 30-49. 86% of the grants went to families with children at home.

I was also interested to observe the relationship of the applicants with the government department prior to their application. Analysis showed that 44% of applicants had had little or no contact with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs prior to application for the grant, while 56% had been in regular contact with the Ministry or Aborigines Welfare Board prior to application for the grant. This information was considered important in that it provided some indication of the extent of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs communication with the Aboriginal community and the degree to which it was offering services to those who were not in regular contact with its client counselling services.

There was a continuous problem in relation to these housing grants. The Minister had used the term 'compensation' in the second reading speech and the grants were indeed seen as a facet of compensation to the Aboriginal community, but this issue threw up others which have never been satisfactorily resolved. For example, what of those who do not wish or are financially unable to become home owners; what of those who were born after 1/1/1968 — should they be eligible? What of those who married after 1/1/1968 — should they be eligible? The difficulties will continue; values shift and alter to allow compromises that affect first one then another programme; they slowly enable resolution of one of the difficulties and then throw up yet newer ones. Truly the 'Science of Muddling Through'.

Some Special Considerations

The Elderly:
Broad-spectrum programmes have to take account, however, of more categories than potential buyers and renters; they must account for the elderly who need special accommodation, and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs annually attempted to provide some special accommodation suitable to elderly people in different areas of the state where they were living.

Young People and Hostels:
Then there was the question of young people wanting to obtain education or apprenticeship training away from home. The Ministry built the Lionel Rose Hostel in Morwell to cope with some of these and then later provided accommodation in Bairnsdale for both sexes, mainly for school students whose parents were distant from a secondary school. Later the Ministry also provided a working men's hostel in Dandenong.

Wards — The Family Group Home:
There was the question of accommodation for the children of inadequately coping parents to be considered. Should the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs undertake to provide an Aboriginal family group home? It chose to do so, partly because of the tremendous shortage of suitable family accommodation for state wards and partly to try and provide some genuine gesture of aid to those families with Aboriginal children whom they knew
were bound to suffer as a result of the stresses and strains that the community was being subjected to in the process of adjusting to the responsibilities of the European community. The rationale for these programmes is a truly complex admixture of politics, and welfare goals, organizational, professional and client values.

Private Renting:
There were also those families who did not wish to rent from the government and there were often difficulties in obtaining rental accommodation. If you had the misfortune to be an Aborigine in Melbourne, unless you could find a sum of $50 or more in advance, plus your fortnight's rent, it was almost impossible to find accommodation. Thus, on a number of occasions Ministry staff and finance were used to assist families to obtain accommodation in Melbourne; on several occasions to undertake quite difficult confrontations with clearly racially prejudiced landlords and house owners.

Settlement Houses:
The final area of significance in the housing field is that of the 'settlement' houses. In fact, when the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs took over, except for one or two done up at Lake Tyers, they were in appalling condition and prior to the handover of the settlements and the land to Aborigines in 1971 almost all houses on Framlingham were demolished and new ones built and Lake Tyers houses were either demolished and new ones erected, rebuilt or extensively renovated. One resident on Framlingham chose to have his old cottage renovated rather than have a new house built.

What all of this says is not easy to tie together. There were constant difficulties in establishing how much money was needed for how many houses of what type in which areas. There were still large gaps in the Aboriginal housing area, but overall the quality of the housing available and the quantity was changing. There was a visible move toward equality in comparison to their white neighbours. But for all the money and effort the gap between needs met and unmet did not close to anything like the extent that seemed desirable to field staff and Aboriginal rights groups.

Some Administrative Conflicts and Interventive Practices
Priorities:
The difficulties in the administration of such a programme should not be overlooked. There is the constant pressure to house everybody, and the field staff are constantly barraged with enquiries about when someone is going to be housed. Whenever there was a regional consultation meeting between local Aborigines and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs staff one of the questions was that of housing; when was someone going to be housed and why X sooner than Y, and so on. It was extremely difficult to communicate that there was only a limited amount of money available and that it could only go so far. Those with big families put in their claim against those with small families; those who were young and had young families put in their claim against those who were older and vice versa. Those who were married to Aborigines, that is two Aboriginal people, put in their claim against those married to non-Aborigines and vice versa; those early on the waiting list in one area put in their claim against those in another area. There were almost infinite varieties of difficulty and dilemma when it came to the allocation of
scarce resources and the compromises that end up as policy decisions rarely satisfy everybody. I believe that operationally the ideal solution would have been to have the Aboriginal people make the policy decisions, that is, establish the hierarchy of priorities. And, while in practice this would have been difficult, there is no evidence available to suggest that any other method could be expected to work as well.

Overcrowding:

Problems are created by overcrowding. What if people will not remove their unwelcome relatives from their house and their continued presence causes problems with neighbours? (Eviction?); what of those who do not pay their rent, or of those who have run up large rental arrears from the past when there was often no attempt by the department to collect it or take any other action if it was not paid (rental subsidy or transition housing)? The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs set out to overcome some of these difficulties by removing the rental subsidies that had applied through the Aborigines Welfare Board, by removing the sub-standard housing supplied by the Board and by planning to hand over all housing to the state housing authority, the Housing Commission of Victoria. I will look briefly at these activities and their effect as partial solutions to some of the difficulties that have been mentioned and some that have not.

The Transition to Standard Housing:
The question has often been asked, what ought to be done about the difficulties that Aborigines are seen to face when they move from their sub-standard humpy or riverbank shanty to a standard house? The issue is not as clear cut as it appears. It has frequently been suggested that the solution is simply to train the Aboriginal family in housekeeping (or some such similar line) and that they will then be able to cope.

It has been demonstrated in Victoria and other places in Australia that transitional housing is not of itself an answer, and it does not provide an answer to the training problem. If you have never lived in a house it is, in fact, as difficult to learn to live in a sub-standard transitional house as it is to live in a standard house. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs argued that removing the transitional phase reduced the amount of adjustment by 50%. Instead of having to adjust twice Aboriginal families only had to adjust once. The Ministry perceived that the adjustments related to a multitude of factors that could not be co-related in any definitive way. These included; access to relatives, access to assistance to cope with business firms, the attitude of business firms and the attitude of the service personnel who were involved with the family, the access to school for children and the attitude of the family toward their future success potential, the employment situation of the breadwinner, their optimism and desire for a way of life that offered greater opportunity for the future and the believability of that optimism. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs could not justify the existence of transitional housing, and unlike the Aborigines Welfare Board, did not perceive the need of places where people could go when they failed. The Ministry was aware that there would be failures and that these people would have to be helped to make the best arrangements within their capabilities; however, it was recognized that the Ministry could not assume responsibility for them, any more than any authority could assume responsibility for any family who were not able to cope with their life circumstance.
The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs determined that it would go out of its way to ensure that no family finally broke up because of lack of help to cope, but it also decided that it had to recognize its limitations and that it could not assist every family or individual to cope. The result of Ministry inability to help would inevitably be that the government agencies that intervened to apply sanctions to behaviour that was considered anti-social or illegal or undesirable in some fashion would have to act. This often appeared to critics as a heartless policy but in the end its embeddedness in the concept of equality allowed it to be constructive and allowed numerous Aboriginal people to relate to the Ministry staff where they had previously not felt able to relate to Aborigines Welfare Board staff. There is an integrity in relationships where the issues are understood by both parties that sometimes makes real help possible. In this instance the message underlying the policy and behaviour of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and its staff was simple: it said ‘we believe that you are equal, that you have the same ability to cope with life situations in this community as other citizens and that given the opportunity most members of your community will or will be able to exercise that option. If you choose not to exercise that option we will assist you as best we are able, but finally you will be on your own.’ In a sense, the Ministry laid it on the line; it refused to accept the responsibility for the lives of the Aboriginal people or to act as a total buffer between them and the normal actions of the community. The Ministry, however, offered to those who were in difficulties some kind of help to cope.

Short of this point is what the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs referred to as intellectual paternalism, a position where Aborigines were treated differently because they were Aborigines, but the ‘differently’ related to not being as capable or responsible as others. An illustration of this would be to ask an Aborigine to speak at a meeting about say the Aboriginal housing or health situation and then when much of what he said was emotive and irrational to not argue the irrationality of his position assumedly because he is not capable of rational logical argument. Transition housing was scrapped because it implied some inability to cope with the normal housing and it was scrapped because Aborigines repeatedly stated that they saw it as insulting. In the opinion of the Ministry there were insufficient resources to allow the duplicate adjustments required by the double moves involved in transition housing. It took twelve months to close Rumbalara and two years to find some way of disposing of it. In 1972 this had proven to be insufficient time. It took slightly longer than a year to close Manatunga, but only a few more months to dispose of all the houses. At some future time the story of the acquisition and disposal of the Rumbalara settlement should be told in detail, including the people who for some period of their lives were residents of the settlement.

I believe that it is true to suggest that time (for some less than a decade for others more than two) has assisted in the development of the skills necessary to survive in a modern urban dwelling. Especially it has helped overcome the difficulties involved in anti-social behaviour; lack of socialization; inadequate social skills to cope with the requirements of a middle-class urban culture; lack of satisfaction leading to a lack of meaning and apathy. All of these contribute to the failure patterns repeated many times in Victoria, especially for the very socially isolated and the unrelating poor.
Non-Payment of Rent and Arrears:
The problem of rental non-payment and rent arrears had dogged the Aborigines Welfare Board from the development of Rumbalara to the end of its days. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in fact carried the difficulty on for several years. It might, with hindsight, prove to be a simply handled situation, but initially the issues were not as clear as they now appear, and the climate, though ripe for change, did need some time in preparation. If a government department establishes inappropriate expectations and fails to require a minimum standard, for a decade, it is not purely and simply a matter of wiping the slate clean and starting afresh. The tenants of Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs houses had established a series of patterns to cope with the inconsistent demands that had been made on them. Some had paid regularly from the day their tenancy commenced, others had paid not a cent from then to the day the Ministry took over, and some of these actually believed that they were not required to pay rent. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs wished to make it clear that it was a minimum requirement that everyone pay the rent charged on their properties, but the Ministry found itself with responsibility for a substantial quantity of housing but with inadequate staff to maintain, build and supervise the properties and it was not designed, nor anxious, to become a major housing authority. It had, however, inherited a difficult situation, and over the first three years of its life it set about the process of establishing administrative machinery to ensure that the regular collection of rents could be undertaken in a proper manner. It did not appreciate early enough the dimension that property would assume and the implications of this for future programmes.

Over this period the confusion as to who owed what was sorted out and the confusion as to what basis various persons were paying various amounts of subsidized rental was worked out. Finally, it became clear that the anomalies were in part due to the fact that there was no machinery for regularly assessing the income of families and therefore there was no regular assessment of rental. Agents were established throughout the state, the Housing Commission of Victoria network was utilised wherever possible and local estate agents were employed where there was no other arrangement practical. It was clear that the principle that needed to be consistently applied was that rent was expected to be paid and regularly and that the sanctions of eviction would be applied to those who failed to meet their obligations in this regard. During the same period the problem of what should be done about the people who had and who had not paid was argued through and through. In the end it was agreed that in the interests of fairness there had to be some positive compensation for those people who had paid regularly, even if it was decided to erase uncollectable debts; for example, a pensioner who, after ten years, owed +$1,000.

In 1972 no action was taken but as I complete the writing of this document the 1973 annual report states that the debts have been written off and the compensatory arrangement has been the granting of a sum to the good payers applicable as a rebate in rent for a period.

Eviction and Some Further Aspects of Rental Housing
The Aborigines Welfare Board never took eviction action because of the difficulty that it faced when eviction had to be considered. The Board, in its report of June 1965, made the comment that there were many difficulties facing Aborigines in new houses.
The report comments on the phenomena of inter-household visiting as a traditional pattern of life now made obvious because it is the government who owns the houses, but that with insufficient accommodation:

Staff cannot effectively 'move on' visitors. This only results in moving the 'problem' from one part of a town to another, or from one town to the next. This is particularly noticeable in West Gippsland and Robinvale where practically every house has at least one extra family sharing accommodation. (p.11.)

In the same report the statement is made that the rent position is occasioning concern and that rental arrears have accrued in many places. The report states:

So far the Board has declined to evict any tenant for non-payment of rent because this would result in the disruption of a family and add to overcrowding elsewhere. With one hand the Board as landlord would have to evict, and with another, the Board as welfare agency would have to find alternative housing. The Board has not been able to evict because there is nowhere for such families to retreat to, except 'shack' life. For this reason, the need is felt for some spare houses (such as a settlement) to which families who do not 'make the grade' could fall back; then defaulting families could be evicted and our threats would assume some meaning. (p.11.)

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was not faced with this problem. Its focus of action related to the concept of equality and this involved equal opportunity and responsibility as well as special assistance to ensure that there existed genuine opportunity for families to be independent and autonomous and able to cope equally with non-Aboriginal families. Thus, eviction problems and rental problems and welfare issues were viewed from a different perspective viz. that circumscribed by normal community legal and social arrangements.

To begin with, the difficulties resulting from hopelessly inadequate quantity and quality of accommodation were no longer so pressing as they had been. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was anxious to ensure that Aborigines were able to function with a minimum of artificial and unnecessary support, but at the same time provided the necessary support to make changes that would help Aborigines shift to normal patterns of action in the community. Thus, two series of actions became linked in developing housing policy. The concept of special rental subsidies was abandoned. Families in housing provided by the Ministry and the Housing Commission of Victoria received rental subsidies on a formula calculated by the Housing Commission, and evictions were to be based on normal community practice. In August 1972 an analysis of the situation showed that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had issued forty notices to quit. The Ministry position was thus different in perspective from the Aborigines Welfare Board.

In 1968 the maximum rent charged on a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs rental house was $6 per week, and Aborigines housed by the Housing Commission were eligible for a government subsidy which brought their rent down to this level. The rent subsidies paid by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to the Housing Commission in 1970 for that financial year amounted to $60,512. Over eighteen months those subsidies were removed and the Ministry rents by August of 1972 were similar to those of the Housing Commission, ranging from $2.90 to $12.30 per week. As a landlord the Ministry saw its
responsibility to collect rent. However, at 19th August, 1972, the Ministry was owed by its tenants $35,945 in unpaid rents, the arrears from separate households varying from $1 to $1100. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had, however, through its constantly improving administrative arrangements and its consistent communications to the Aboriginal community managed to improve the understanding of the importance of the rental obligation of its tenants and over two years the rental return pattern improved as shown in Table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1.7.70 - 31.12.70</th>
<th>1.1.71 - 30.6.71</th>
<th>1.7.71 - 31.12.71</th>
<th>1.1.72 - 30.6.72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rents due to MAA from tenants</td>
<td>$10,252 (100%)</td>
<td>$10,497 (100%)</td>
<td>$12,180 (100%)</td>
<td>$19,829 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rents paid to MAA by tenants</td>
<td>$5,906 (58.5%)</td>
<td>$7,218 (69%)</td>
<td>$9,161 (75%)</td>
<td>$12,197 (51.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent arrears</td>
<td>$4,346 (41.5%)</td>
<td>$3,279 (31%)</td>
<td>$3,014 (25%)</td>
<td>$7,632 (38.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 16
Rental Dues, Payments and Arrears 1.7.70 to 30.6.72

The apparent decline in rental payments in the first half of 1972 was due to the removal of rental subsidies and had been anticipated, as a period of adjustment was expected.

The average (mean) amount of rental arrears per household was approximately $240 and 130 of the 139 tenants were in arrears. Any organization acting as landlord in such circumstances would feel obligated to take action to evict unsatisfactory tenants. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs since its inception had therefore issued forty notices to quit. What is significant is what is perceived as the proper role and function of the Ministry in relation to these notices. It is this which separates its positions from that of the Board before it.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs saw itself as renting houses to Aborigines to assist with serious accommodation shortages. For many years the backing of rental arrears inherited from the Aborigines Welfare Board had been accepted as a necessary part of the process of assisting Aboriginal families in the community to try to cope with and adjust to the general requirements of the society. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs believed, however, that allowing the situation to continue suggested that Aborigines are less able to accept responsibility than other people. (This was its method of stating its position.) The Ministry saw eviction as the final sanction, only to be applied when all else had failed. The eviction process took approximately 3-4 months and was in fact a well designed helping process. If at the end of that time a family had to be evicted and/or left their house, then the Ministry saw itself as having failed to help the family solve its problems for the moment.

Disposition of the forty notices to quit previously referred to:

two left their house after the notice to quit was served,
twenty-nine stayed after the notice to quit was served,
nineteen made payments,
*five agreed to pay rent,
*one had the rent paid by friends,
*two were still under consideration,
*two notice to quit were about to be served,
Nine had proceeded to court action,
*six had left the house of their own accord,
*three had started making payments after court action.

The Eviction Process:
The process included at least two or more months of continuous counselling where possible by a social worker and/or Aboriginal field staff member. If this process was unsuccessful then the legal process was commenced through the accounts and administrative sections of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. If the family had to go to court the Ministry took action to ensure that they were represented in court and could fight the action if they so desired. Several families did so. If the family was unsuccessful and left the house they were not dumped by the Ministry. Counselling and assistance was offered; if suitable alternate non-Ministry accommodation could not be located by the family or friends, the Ministry assisted where possible and offered to assist to locate temporary foster placement for the children if this would assist while the family got on their feet. If necessary the Ministry assisted the family to get the children placed as wards of state while they attempted to re-establish themselves.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was aware of the very real difficulties of families who found themselves at the point of eviction, but, if after all other avenues had been explored it was clear that the family could not or was unwilling to accept their minimum responsibility, then the Ministry perceived that the interests of the children, the family and the community could not be served by artificially preserving and maintaining a dependent unit. The Ministry continued its contact with the family and it hoped that in the future the opportunity to re-establish the family would again arise. The Ministry thus saw eviction action as the penultimate stage in the helping process, the necessary action of a responsible authority who had exhausted its other resources to help maintain the family situation.

The Future of Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs Ownership of Property
The last issue that should be examined in the housing area is that of the ownership of properties. The Ministry could see itself as becoming a minor housing authority with neither the facilities nor the inclination to do so. Thus, mid-1972 the Ministry examined its position vis-a-vis special housing requirements of the Aboriginal population, taking into consideration its capacity to handle the expanding role of landlord and minor housing authority and the problems created by this role for an organization not geared to permanence, and certainly not able to fully staff and maintain a small housing authority as it was becoming, with the continuing expenditure in that area.

As a result of its deliberations the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs came to a conclusion. It should plan to hand over to the Housing Commission of Victoria the bulk of its rental programme. It believed it should also do so as long as it could build into the
transfer, safeguards that the continued housing of Aboriginal families would proceed along the policy guidelines established; that the number of Aborigines housed remained at least the same per annum as previously, and that some suitable arrangement could be made for those families who were still not likely to be able to meet the minimum requirements of the Housing Commission but who were nevertheless in need of rental housing.

The problems were numerous and widely spread; however, a feasible plan was evolved. At the time the study was terminated it had not been put into action. Its elements were really simple enough of themselves; the administrative and political machinery required to activate them and maintain them were complex. The salient items included the Commonwealth Aboriginal Affairs housing grant being passed through the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to the Housing Commission of Victoria in exchange for annual statistics ensuring that the increase in available accommodation was maintained. A special arrangement to allow for the housing of families below the Housing Commission minima either through the Commission or a small housing fund in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; a series of agreements about the handover arrangements in the light of maintenance, arrears, property state at handover, and the like. The ground had been prepared by the removal of the special subsidy. By this time the Housing Commission and Ministry rental and rental rebate systems were synchronised and the whole proposal was feasible. It was, with the safeguards to Aboriginal affairs policy built in, also consistent with Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs expressed policy. The Housing Grant scheme, financed as it was through State funds, would remain with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The Ministry had in four years moved through its cycle of development and had undertaken to bring Aboriginal housing under sound management and had maintained its stated objective of equalising the relationship between the Aboriginal people and the rest of the community. The problems were a long way from all being completely solved, but they were in focus and the process of change had proceeded through another major phase.
To conclude, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had established and operated an effective broad-aim programme. It had shifted housing from a fragmented residual programme for a few families in extreme poverty to a community-wide development programme for all members of the Aboriginal community — a nearly institutional programme recognising the rights of all to equal opportunity. It had established a reasonably clear picture of the needs/resources gap and had planfully moved to close it. Its manifest and extant goals were congruent in this area and its communication channels with the system were operational. It located felt and expressed needs and locked normative and comparative needs into the logical perspective of the general community, thus reducing considerably their arbitrary nature. The rising comparison level brought increased Aboriginal dissatisfaction but mechanisms were developed through professional field counselling programmes to work with this. The problems were not fully resolved but the intervention programme proved eminently functional and effective.

The Ministry acquired the responsibility for rental housing from the Aborigines Welfare Board. During the four years of the Ministry’s existence, the two transition settlements had been closed, the Lake Tyers and Framlingham settlements had been brought up to normal standards; a number of properties purchased or built in unsuitable locations had been disposed of, and a number of original Aborigines Welfare Board houses modernised. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had at that time 145 rental houses, of which 139 were occupied and the rest being renovated prior to re-letting.

EDUCATION (DATA ON POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES)

From the early days of the Aborigines Welfare Board there had been a recognition that education in the formal sense was important, perhaps ‘the’ single most significant area around which activity for change could be centered. Up to the time the study concluded, it had not achieved the status of primary concern but had begun to take on the aspect of a very widespread and pervasive importance. Up to 1967 education did not even warrant a separate head of expenditure, being covered by ‘relief and assistance’. However, in that year the Aborigines Welfare Board spent $50,000 on education programmes.

In 1968-69 the annual report shows that $40,000 was spent on education. In 1969-70 the actual figure less adventure camps was $60,000. In 1970-71 the actual figure less adventure camps was $97,000. In 1971-72 the actual figure less adventure camps was $122,500. In 1972-73 the actual figure less adventure camps was $177,000.

From 1970-71 to 1972-73 additional money was spent by the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs through the Department of Education and Science on study grants and secondary grants. (For a comprehensive set of all available educational statistics 1965-72 see Table 17, Appendix D.)

The significance of these figures increases considerably if it is added that during 1971-72 and 1972-73 the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs also increased
significantly its expenditure in Victoria in the field of secondary education and study grants. So the real expenditure figure on education jumps astronomically between, say, 1967-68 the last year of the Aborigines Welfare Board, and 1972-73, five years later, to an actual figure in excess of $200,000. Not only does this represent an increase of more than 300% but it expresses a change in the depth and extent of education programmes. A new dimension is created which is congruent with the philosophy of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and its objectives. It also represents resources beyond the wildest fantasies of the Aborigines Welfare Board.

Again, in education, there was the difficulty of data shortage. What was the size of the problem with which the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was confronted? What was the nature of the inadequacy of the situation about which something had to be done? The source of information in this area was primarily the development of the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund and the census, together with an awareness that age/grade retardation and early school leaving were real problems and that research was needed to provide some sort of basis for the development of sound policy.

A scholarship offered to all eligible people attracted all those eligible and thus the actual number of students became known.

To outline the nature of the education programmes used, to clarify the nature of the interventive system, a somewhat different approach will be used to that for the Housing programmes. The problems were of a different nature. Who should be the primary intervenors — government or voluntary organizations? This was an issue with education but not with housing. The reasons will become clear. In addition, there was the fact that the development of awareness as to the appropriate means of intervention and the appropriate areas for interventive action developed differently in the education area than in housing or health. Therefore the following outline, while rather disjointed in some respects, will trace the path of interventive action. As it does so it will raise in some detail the issues raised until 1972 when the study terminated. Again, because the period is (in terms of intervention) so short, the details will not be pursued in minute detail; they are less relevant to an understanding of the situation than the sequence and the process.

Background to the Development of Educational Incentive Programmes (Government and Voluntary)

Very early the Aborigines Welfare Board began to provide financial assistance to secondary students (through their parents) for fees, books and clothing. In 1961 the amount was $60 paid not in cash but in orders for school clothes and a cheque for fees, usually to the school. This practice continued with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Thus the government’s only actual educational programme per se was the grant toward secondary education. The Aborigines Advancement League introduced a scholarship for ‘needy’ students in the mid-1960’s and assisted 30-50 secondary students per annum. The Save the Children Fund, already operating play centres, introduced primary and secondary bursaries paid through their local committees. These went to Aboriginal families known to them and whom they felt to be deserving. They also offered some
special scholarships to students in registered (private) schools. However, in general, their assistance did not involve a great deal of money but relatively quite a substantial number of students. These activities covered the years up to 1969 and were supported by a variety of special scholarships offered to one or two students by schools, religious organizations and service organizations.

In 1966 a new experimental scheme was developed as a result of the activities of Carey Grammar and a number of University Abschol organizations, the Aborigines Advancement League, plus one or two service groups. As a result of educational motivation problems that I had found in coping with students and parents in the Western District, the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund was created by these bodies (to which further reference will be made shortly). The A.E.I.S.F. began with secondary students, in an attempt, experimentally, to use financial incentives to encourage students to attend school regularly, to remain at school longer and achieve, therefore, better academic performance.

Extension of this scheme was supported by government and it became clear that commencing assistance at secondary level was too late in the educational process. Ironically, the first scholarship available in Australia was established by the National Union of Australian University Students, ABSCHOL, which offered places to any Aborigine who reached tertiary level. When the numbers proved to be too small because there were no Victorians reaching the end of secondary school, the Aborigines Welfare Board established their secondary school financial assistance programme, and by 1968 aid through the A.E.I.S.F. scheme was commenced to primary students in an effort to establish regular patterns of school attendance before the students reached secondary school educationally retarded and at a serious disadvantage for future study. Finally it became clear that even assistance at primary level was not reaching the core of the difficulty and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, aware that the Aborigines Welfare Board and education authorities had often referred to the need for pre-schooling, financed the Australian Council for Educational Research to undertake a study of the primary school student, comparing Aboriginal students with migrant and Australian born non-Aboriginal students. This study found that Aboriginal students, even when entering primary school at the correct age, did so with a disadvantage in their language skills and in their concept formation.

Thus the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs undertook the development of a pre-school programme including personnel and bursaries, as well as supporting the development and continuation of the Bernard Van Lee experimental pre-school programme (to which reference will be made shortly). Therefore, it was in Victoria that the process of intervention logically worked its way backward from tertiary to secondary to primary to pre-school. While there is evidence that the Aborigines Welfare Board was aware of the need for scholarships and help at all levels of education, they were not yet able to mount programmes comprehensive enough to meet what they recognized dimly as a major educational problem. It took time, a growing awareness of the real size of the difficulties and their actual nature before the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was able to mount, twelve years after the Aborigines Welfare Board was created, a comprehensive
range of interventive educational programmes. The reason (amongst others) that suggests itself is quite unsophisticated; it simply appears that in spite of existent knowledge the complexity and the widespread difficulties precluded the effective development of programmes in education until the cumulative impact of the total situation created an awareness among the people planning the interventions simultaneously with the availability of adequate staff and finance. Thus money and political readiness played their part and from 1968 onward seems to have been 'the time'.

Now that the sequence of events is established the programmes outlined earlier will be examined one by one in different degrees of detail. Some of the difficulties and dilemmas of policy and practice will be highlighted to show the nature of the compromises and the values involved.

Pre-School Programmes

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs pre-school programme developed, in a sense, out of a not long-standing educational awareness that children who attended pre-school seemed to do better than those who did not. It developed also out of the activities of the Monash Centre for research into Aboriginal Affairs, which brought Mr. Peter Kreitoff of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation to Australia, and put forward a submission for the establishment of some experimental pre-school programmes among Aborigines, not only in Victoria but in several states. The programme also developed out of the concern that led to the Australian Council for Educational Research (A.C.E.R.) study. The findings supported the belief that Aboriginal students were entering school at a disadvantage which was inhibiting their chances of educational success.

Perhaps an analysis of the logic of the situation will clarify the basis for action. Pre-school programmes have frequently proven most advantageous to the children of middle-class parents. It has been observed that children from 'less educationally-enriched' homes are less well equipped when they enter primary school than the children of middle-class parents. It has been further observed that many of the children from educationally unstimulating homes do not attend pre-school. It has been assumed that lack of pre-schooling in part created the deficiency with which these children entered primary school. Programmes such as "Headstart" were established to provide pre-school education for less 'privileged' children. It has been reasonably well established that the participation of such children in community pre-school programmes does not alone resolve the problems of these children, such programmes not necessarily being geared for their needs.

The research undertaken by A.C.E.R. for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs suggested that Aboriginal children enter primary school deficient in certain areas of psycho-linguistic and conceptual development.

An examination of the Bernard Van Leer programmes as outlined in the Bernard Van Leer Foundation Newsletters suggests that these programmes are experiments aimed at overcoming this disadvantage. In Queensland the focus appears to have been placed on language deficiency itself, and an analysis of this deficiency led to specific compensatory educational pre-school programmes. In New South Wales, the focus has been placed on
the family and on the parent/child interrelationship and effort directed to increasing
the parent’s awareness of the child's needs through creative play situations in natural
group settings. In South Australia a group oriented compensatory programme has been
developed with a traditionally oriented group using English and their local language.
The focus is again the involvement of parents in the development of their children; in
this instance in a more structured group setting than in New South Wales, aimed
specifically at providing thematic compensatory learning situations for young children,
intended to assist them to overcome cognitive and linguistic retardation resulting from
disadvantaged backgrounds.

In Victoria, the programme has been focussed on the mother and child, specifically
on the development of compensatory programmes for each individual child.
Programmes are carried out mainly in the home, the teacher being used as a model for
the mother in demonstrating effective parent/child verbal interaction processes, as well
as providing specific learning experiences for the child when in the period prior to the
development of language, using a variety of situations both in the home with the parent
and separately with the pre-school teacher. Flexibility of programme and adaptation to
individual needs seems to be the keynote. (At the time of writing, December 1973, no
report had yet been produced.)

The Ministry was faced with the dilemma of awaiting results from these various
programmes or undertaking action regardless. It chose to act because the pressure for
action was immediate and the predicted research outcomes were unlikely to effect the
general pre-school development programmes. Rather, they were likely to suggest specific
desirable areas where additional programmes might be developed. The question was, how
should the Ministry act in the first instance? It saw the issue as being the need to involve
members of the Aboriginal population in pre-school programmes and was aware of the
physical difficulties involved. Fortunately, at this stage the Commonwealth Office of
Aboriginal Affairs indicated that it, too, was concerned with pre-school activity and
commonwealth finance became available.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, following extensive consultations with the senior
pre-school professionals in the state, chose to employ two senior pre-school advisors who
divided the state up between them and whose task it was to provide a programme
consistent with the overall programme of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. They would
be involved in meeting with and talking to Aboriginal mothers about the needs of and
advantages of pre-school activities for their children, and they would make contact with
the pre-schools, teachers and committees in the area and they would act as an educative
go-between or bridge introducing the resources to the parents and vice versa. They would
be backed up by educational material in the newsletter that went out monthly. They
would have access to scholarships or bursaries that would guarantee that every parent
could afford to send their child to pre-school. They would be able to offer to the pre-
school subsidies provided by the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs, for centres
who took in a proportion of Aboriginal children. They were also able to offer to suitable
centres the possibility of employing a suitable Aboriginal pre-school assistant paid for by
the Commonwealth.
All told, the programme “took-off” well and the advisors were able to establish (with the help of the census data and the local staff) which areas contained children of suitable age and to make contact. By 1972 they had located in the order of 800 potential children and had 21% of these attending pre-school. They seemed to have won the confidence of most of the people with whom they had made contact. The alternative to this type of programme would have been to attempt to mount and run an educational compensation programme for primary schoolers, after they had entered primary school, to help them overcome the conceptual and psycholinguistic disability with which they started primary school. In entering this area the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had made contact through informal meetings and seminars with the pre-school profession in the state and had made efforts to seek their assistance in developing the proposals.

The next step following the A.C.E.R. study was to commission a further study by A.C.E.R. to find out whether these children who entered school at a disadvantage maintained this disadvantage throughout their school life; whether they made up the deficit as they proceeded, or whether the deficit increased and they fell further behind. When my study was terminated the results of the A.C.E.R. research study number 2 were not available.

The Tutorial Scheme — An Unsuccessful Project

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs introduced, or took over and extended, a scheme of special tutorial assistance to primary school students living in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Believing that a possible method of assisting these students was to offer them special tutorial help of a socialization nature, and having a willing group of Abschol students wanting to be involved, the Ministry for some 2-3 years undertook to match up students with tutors for some number of students (upward of 50-60). The scheme was not a success. There were inadequate controls as well as difficulties in adequately supervising the scheme. It was difficult both for the students, the families and the Ministry staff member who was responsible for organizing the scheme. It was, however, an early attempt to take some action in respect of the believed difficulties of primary school students. It was inadequate due to administrative difficulties and philosophical discrepancies between the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the participating tutors.

The Aborigines Education Incentive Scholarship Fund (A.E.I.S.F.)

Without doubt the most comprehensive and effective scheme was the A.E.I.S.F. Victoria was the only state in 1971 to have a scholarship scheme that reached almost every Aboriginal child at primary and secondary school. The A.E.I.S.F. scholarship philosophy depended on accepting the fact that the future of Aboriginal education in Victoria lay in Aboriginal attendance and performance to a satisfactory standard at Education Department schools. It rejected the feasibility of special segregated schools unless these are established by Aborigines as registered schools. The size of Aboriginal communities in Victoria is too small to make special schools viable; the style of living of most Aboriginal people in Victoria is not so different from that of at least some sections of the rest of the community for this to provide an argument for special facilities. The scheme was never concerned with the applicability of school curricula which may or may not have been entirely suitable to Aboriginal students and others. The scheme was concerned primarily with the participation of Aboriginal people in the present system.
The philosophy of the scheme changed over time but the elements were developed from the same central theses. There were several assumptions inherent in the objectives of the scheme. The present generation of Aboriginal parents had generally less secondary education than the general population and many had not proceeded beyond primary schooling. As a result there was in the community a rather depressed social and employment status relative to the population as a whole. Thus many, in fact the majority of present day Aboriginal parents, had not been able to mix with nor participate in employment which involved professionally qualified people or people whose educational achievements allowed them to enjoy a better standard of living, higher salaries and comparative job security. Thus these parents were themselves seriously disadvantaged when it came to encouraging their children; they did not have a knowledge of its mechanics nor the advantages often associated with it. It is also possible that parents would see the educational process as creating rifts in the family between themselves and their children, and it is understandable that they would be inclined to block this process.

The domestic situation of Aboriginal children in 1966-67 and even later was seen to be not generally conducive to academic attainment nor motivation. Generally poorer living conditions, frequent overcrowding with limited home access to books, magazines and study facilities militated against achievement. This was still the case although the housing situation had improved significantly.

At least until 1965 the empirical evidence demonstrated to the Aboriginal family that educational attainment was not within its grasp. Virtually no Aboriginal student had proceeded beyond third form at that time in Victoria. There were no professional people within the community to act as 'models' nor any very successful business men; in fact no one who could demonstrate that higher academic qualifications were either within reach of Aboriginal students or important in any meaningful way. Because the education system is basically oriented toward the middle-class European community in Victoria, students from other social groups have generally fared less well. As well, the facts seemed to indicate that Aboriginal children were entering school later than their European counterparts, attending less frequently, performing less well, leaving earlier and generally in poor communication with the total network of motivation and meaning and value associated with education in our culture. So it seemed reasonable to believe that there were certain negative pressures on students as follows:

* Parents were generally not motivated toward full educational participation by their children, were often in conflict with the school that equally made no compensating nor encouraging moves toward involving them.
* There were real limits set by the ability of parents to assist their children with their school work. There was also frequently an apparent desire for the child to contribute to the family income. However, my observations suggest that this was apparent but not real as the children almost never did work sufficiently to provide a significant addition to the family income and rarely did families in fact exert pressure on them to do so even after they had left school.
* Aboriginal children frequently found themselves handicapped in fundamental matters associated with attendance at school. They frequently were inadequately clothed and this meant no shoes or uniforms which made them, or their parents,
feel self-conscious. They frequently had insufficient money for lunches or for other school excursions. The cumulative effect of which seems to have been the extension of negative relationships and attitudes with the school and school authorities. Many of these difficulties were almost certainly unnecessary if the circumstances within which communication took place between parents, the school and the pupils could be altered.

* Toward the latter years of secondary school the peer group, especially older peers who had already left school, frequently exerted a strong negative pull in relation to the school and schoolwork. This pull related both to the student's ability to continue regular attendance and to the attitude toward the behaviour expected from the school.

* The diffidence of parents to become involved with the school authorities, teachers, etc., and the resultant infrequent contact prevented to a considerable extent close working relationships that might have allowed some of the other problems to be resolved.

With this background the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund geared itself to deal with the poor school attendance, early leaving age, age/grade retardation and relationships between Aboriginal families, students and teachers. The scheme developed along lines that supported certain principles:

* The project was designed to raise the educational norms of the Aboriginal community rather than providing opportunities for outstanding students. The reasons for this lay in the demonstrated failure of special projects that had attempted to single individuals out for special attention and this meant that the scholarships were offered to every student in a geographic region.

* The scholarships were to be operated in such a way as to try and provide stimulation, demonstrate the advantages of and encourage awareness of the education process to Aboriginal parents and students and to the non-Aboriginal community, especially to the teachers. They were also aimed at increasing the participation of Aborigines in the education of their children and at improving the employment opportunities of scholars.

* When the scheme was established in a new area the principals and headmasters and district inspectors of all the primary and secondary schools in the area were requested to form the local committee which was the basic administrative unit of the organization. In every case the consent of the principals for the introduction of the scheme into his school was sought and local citizens were also enlisted to help run the committees. (This was made possible by the support given by the then Minister for Education, Mr. Lindsay Thompson.)

The administrative details matter only because they allowed a central committee of some 25 people through an executive of 4-5 persons to operate some 1200 scholarships through 31 local committees in 37 administrative areas with the aid of 16 voluntary liaison officers, to issue —

1500 equipment allowance cheques,
2400 cheques per month to parents and children,
24,000 scholarship cheques per year on an administrative budget of less than 10%
Operate a total budget of approximately $130,000 per annum with one full time secretary and a part time executive officer (1972 figures).

The scheme was administered by local committees who were responsible for making arrangements for parents to come to the schools to collect their cheques monthly from the principal and pay them into a bank account. The student cheques also had to be paid into a bank account. The decision to withhold a payment was made by a local committee if attendance fell below a set minima without adequate written excuse being presented. Application for a scholarship had to be made at the beginning of each year by any parent wishing to participate and monthly statistics were returned through every school to the local committee and thence to the central executive on attendance and cheque payment.

If payments were stopped for any month the payment was automatically available the following month unless attendance criteria were not met. The executive met three times yearly to evaluate the operation of the scheme with each local committee separately and there was a considerable amount of actual local autonomy and thus involvement in the operation of the scheme. It was expected that there should be some beneficial effects of the scheme as a result of this type of administration:

* Attendance should increase rapidly as there was immediate reward for regular attendance and the consciousness of the attendance criterion and the need for written communication with the school should work toward establishing regular patterns of attendance.
* The additional income at the higher levels would have the effect of encouraging the student to remain at school for longer than previously, and even if the operating variable was not in fact the money then the intense and demonstrably valued behaviour of regularly attending and staying at school (non-Aborigines were paying them to do so, and money is universally valued), could be expected to have the effect of a silent communication that supported the possibility that there may be advantage in the future from continuation of this behaviour, even if its value was not immediately apparent to the parent, the child or any relative.
* Parents could be expected to become more involved in the total educational process if for no other reason (at the lowest possible level) than that with several children at school education was a valuable source of income. Notes had to be written to school and parents had to have regular contact with the teachers at the school in relation to their regular monthly cheques. This would enable parent/teacher contact at a meaningful level to develop in a large number of cases. (This was also a feature which raised a great deal of critical comment.)
* Teachers' requirement to fill out the monthly return and to be aware of the Aboriginal students could be anticipated to have (in the long run) beneficial effects on the students' progress. Concern did come to be focussed on the real difficulties of Aboriginal students and on their progress.
* The money itself offered the opportunity for Aboriginal students to be able to participate equally in the activities of the school, in extra-curricula activities and in sporting and other events. The money for the parents and the separate money for the student offered interesting possibilities for the development of initiative and responsibility. (N.B. There were no conditions attached to the money; parents and
students could spend it in any way they chose. This factor also led to very considerable critical discussion.) The purpose of the money was the incentive. Thus, though parents were asked to use some of it for the education of their children, there was no compulsion for them to do so. In fact, most did.

* It was hoped that there would be some effect of capital injection into a seriously capital deficient community and over time there seems to have been some benefit from this aspect.
* The establishment of the scheme in such a way as to ensure that all participants had to open and operate a bank account was seen as a marginal benefit.
* The effect of increased attendance, it was hoped, would lead to greater satisfaction, greater home support and improved motivation. Overall, that there would be a slow change in the attitudes and values and behaviour associated with education.
* It was also hoped that the effect of involving members of the community in the educational problems and difficulties and realities of the Aboriginal families in the area might have the effect of increasing the understanding and cooperation between the two communities and the fact of continued involvement would give the non-Aboriginal members of committees a stake in helping in the future of the Aboriginal students who had participated in the scheme and whom they would now know to some extent.

There were some other relevant aspects of the administration of the scheme which affected the expected outcome. Whenever there was a payment stoppage the parents were forwarded a letter by the committee explaining why, and if this was believed inadequate then a committee member or the headmaster, if the parent visited the school, might add to the explanation.

The headmaster or member of staff distributing the cheques was never asked to take responsibility for the payment stoppage. Thus they could explain to the parent or student why the payment had been stopped and help in explaining how this could be avoided in the following month.

For the purpose of the scheme, payments were made to any family where there had been at least one Aboriginal spouse and where there was a student child of Aboriginal descent. The scholarships have never been paid to students in institutions, children with European adopted parents, or in other situations where Aboriginal students were not living with Aboriginal families.

The basis of the scheme was incentive to Aboriginal parents to overcome the enormous deficit that the Aboriginal community suffered as a result of its isolation from the motivating forces in the society. In this respect it differed from most of the government sponsored programmes whose base was the Aboriginality of its clients.

The scheme was commenced as an experiment and as a result of its demonstrated success in improving attendance dramatically the Aborigines Welfare Board and then, to a much greater extent, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs supported its development throughout the state. The question of its termination had been built into its development.
It was felt that it should wind down when the data indicated that normality with the non-Aboriginal community of students was reached in terms of attendance, age/grade comparability and length of stay at school. In a way these are simple enough indicators to locate and assess. It is interesting, however, to note that Broom & Glenn in an analysis of the educational attainment of the total Negro population of the United States of America, state that complete educational equality will not be attained for four to five decades after equality is attained in the young adult population. It is extremely difficult to base programmes on this type of consideration. In fact, the A.E.I.S.F. believed that the initial task would be considered adequately undertaken when there was statistical comparability and that at that time there was sound argument for the winding down of the scheme. The difficulty was that the capital input would have become a part of the expectation patterns of the community. If this was so, then one method of wind-down could be to continue the payment at the fixed level and allow inflation to reduce the actual value to zero over a decade or less. On the other hand, it was consistent with Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs policy to create equality by reducing and removing the scholarship after the demonstrated need period was passed and thus allow the community to make its own normal adaptation to the change. This would make the scheme a short-term booster programme.

There is another argument that has been used against the scheme from time to time and that is the deleterious effects that could be expected from paying parents and students for attendance when they, in fact, had a legal obligation to attend in any case. There has simply been no way of establishing any such effect in the period of the operation of the scheme and no one has been able to suggest what sort of indicator to look for. There has also been the suggestion that the effect of white backlash might negate the effectiveness of the scheme, increasing the prejudice against the Aboriginal community. This may be so. The scheme has maintained from the beginning, as has the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in its other programmes, that the fact that there are other groups who could and should benefit from special assistance is not an argument for not providing it to a group who demonstrably need it. The fact that there will possibly be some backlash needs to be known and Aboriginal parents and participants given to understand what this entails. After this it is up to the participants whether they continue and/or press for the continuance of the scheme. Anyhow, the problem began to resolve itself in a rather unexpected way. The Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs developed the secondary grants scheme which they applied first to the latter years of secondary school. It covered Aboriginal students throughout Australia, and so the A.E.I.S.F. phased out during 1971, 1972 and 1973 as the commonwealth took over. The commonwealth took over completely by 1973 the total secondary scholarship scene and increased the amount of payments to as high as $600 per annum for 6th form.

The Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund had intended to phase out and give parents twelve months advance warning by letter. The question of the continuation of the primary scheme had been under discussion for some time. The A.E.I.S.F. scheme had demonstrated in a detailed evaluation study in December 1969 and from data collected in 1970 and 1971 that after three years attendance figures reached 'normality' and they appeared not to improve after that. Thus it was intended to phase out the primary scheme at the end of four years in each area, and the plan devised included...
collecting data on the period following the phase-down in order to observe the nature of changes that might occur during that period. If, then, the scheme had failed to establish permanent change another programme could be developed to meet the new situation. When this study ended the wind-down had begun in the first two years of the primary scheme.

By 1971 the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was financing the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund to the extent of more than $80,000 per annum and was by far the major contributor. The dilemmas associated with financing a scheme of such magnitude, administered by young undergraduate and just-graduated students, should not be under-estimated. The question of the most appropriate locus of action and responsibility in such programmes was discussed again and again. Yet in this area the flexibility of the Ministry programme did permit side by side operation of government and voluntary organization. The success of such an arrangement does suggest the possibility that contract welfare, financed by government but undertaken by voluntary organizations may provide in Australia some of the solutions to the difficult task of establishing experimental projects; especially those which may need to exist for limited time periods and are not easily located in the more permanent structures of the Public Service, yet can remain within the general supervisory area of the Public Treasury. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs’ use of the A.E.I.S.F., the Australian Council for Educational Research, Monash University and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, demonstrates the reality of this possibility and suggest ways of overcoming the difficulty that dogged the development of the enormously complex and expensive housing programmes.

To conclude, in education the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs again shifted clearly from the residual character of the Board’s schemes which partially aided secondary students and their families because of the poverty in which they lived. The Ministry made educational opportunity available to all from birth to death without selection of the most needy alone and thus clearly established an institutional frame of reference. In this way it acted to cope with all levels of the educational system and its comprehensive systemic approach to education was congruent to its focus on equality as the ideal sought by the total system. It closed the needs/resources gap substantially and it acted on the basis of normative and comparative needs, ignoring in this area particularly both felt and expressed needs; seeing these as not relevant to a determination of desirable programmes. It was able to do this because the Ministry accepted that its ideal of ‘equality’ meant equality of opportunity and responsibility and recognized that such an objective is possible only when there is knowledge and access to training for skilled work. Education was perceived as an element in the total picture and that its lack was a major factor in blocking Aborigines from entering the main stream of Australian society and as such must be overcome. The success of these programmes can be expected to increase the comparison level and thus the relative dissatisfaction of the Aboriginal community, especially at its lack of control over programmes which affect it. Intervention programmes of many varieties, some short-term, some longer term, some handled by government and others by outside contracting, were meshed together to make a comprehensive and cohesive package that met both the needs of the situation and the objectives of the
organization. The organization was thus able to specify desired outcomes and with reasonable clarity to evaluate success.

HEALTH — DATA ON POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES

Introduction
The philosophy and goals of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs health programmes are in every major respect congruent with its overall policy goals and with those of most of its programmes in other areas. Because health represents, I believe, the third major activity area, some of the significant aspects of the programmes and their relationship to Ministry policy are examined. As with housing and education the objects are normative (as defined). The programmes focus on the use Aborigines make of the medical and para-medical services in the community; on their relationship to public health services; on their attitudes to health matters and the attitudes of health service personnel and other members of the community toward them. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs perceived that by establishing reasonable, limited, specific goals (which would ultimately be supported and developed as a result of activities in housing, education and other programmes) these could be met within a decade and thus the need for specific Aboriginal health programmes to be continued would cease and programmes in this area could be progressively phased out.

The staffing and financial resources of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs favoured their situation. A senior sister was appointed and she had 5-7 visiting nurses who worked under her professional supervision.

The Ministry was aware (in a way which had continually eluded the Aborigines Welfare Board) that health is not primarily a matter of medical care. The Ministry realized that no amount of immunization would protect a child in a damp and unhealthy house: that in a home where there was inadequate regular income and thus a constant lack of money, minimal diet and nutrition will exist and result in a lack of resistance to disease (causing high morbidity). The Ministry perceived that many non-medical factors influence health, including: employment, income, housing conditions, humpy camps, proximity to doctors and medical care, education, ability to read and write, clothes, experience in dealing with European medical and paramedical professionals, especially doctors, nurses, dentists, receptionists and the like; confidence in handling social situations involving these people. Health was thus considered as a by-product of social attitudes and physical circumstances.

Thus, the health programme, like the rest, was designed to fit into the overall programme and the specific health projects which were undertaken reflected the integrative nature of the policy and an awareness that the rate and nature of one programme area was related to the others operating in the same geographic area at the same time. The fact about health that the Aborigines Welfare Board seems not to have realized and which the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was conscious of was simply that good health is socially determined and not medically created.
The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs thus implemented more comprehensive and more preventively focussed programmes based on its philosophy of broad-spectrum intervention than past administrations and because of their resources their efforts were less thinly spread than had been the case under the Aborigines Welfare Board. It tried to ensure that operational principles and assumptions underlying programmes were consistent, that they could be seen to be relevant to the long term as well as to consistent short term objectives and based rather on cause than on symptom. There was a genuine attempt to ensure, through staff meetings and staff training, that consistent application of the policy existed from the top to the base of the organization and short term programmes were developed in such a way that they could be justified by rational argument and were based on reasonable expectations of success and measured where possible by meaningful social indicators.

Considerable qualitative and other evidence from the past indicated clearly that Aboriginal health in Victoria was not as good as the health of the general community and knowledge of and utilization of health services was particularly low.

**Long and Short Term Goals of the Health Programme**
The goals were simple and direct.

**Long Term:**
The long term general goal was to improve Aboriginal health in Victoria without any further damage to the self-respect, dignity and pride of the Aboriginal people.

**Short Term — Specific:**
The short term specific goal was to engage large numbers of Aboriginal people in educative activities which would enable them to use the available medical services themselves. To encourage parents to use the services in the interests of their young children, and to establish good health practices. To encourage an awareness of the need for an involvement in health insurance schemes. These objectives are in fact broken down to more specific performance objectives for the various facets of the projects.

**Staff:**
5-7 visiting nurses, the number varied throughout the period of the project, under the direction of a senior sister were the grassroots workers. The nurses reported to the senior sister for professional health matters and obtained supervision and professional back-up from her. However, operationally the visiting nurse was responsible to the area social worker, who controlled the team working in each geographic area.

The significance of this structural administrative arrangement lies in the fact that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs required the visiting nurse to act in diametrical opposition to her training. This produced role stress and role conflict. The nurse is trained to help the patient directly — in fact to manage the patient; the Ministry required nurses not to manage their patients but to help them to manage themselves. The real crisis was observed when, for example, a visiting nurse came across a clearly malnourished child. The organizational arrangement at the Ministry allowed the visiting nurse to get professional supervision within her own profession, but to be responsible
for her actions to the social worker who during the early stages, more congruently embodied the philosophy of the programme.

The decision regarding the duration of the visiting nurse health programme and the associated projects were as follows: it was considered that if and when, as a result of continuous supervision, assessment and discussion, it could be demonstrated that an area was no longer in need of a full-time visiting nurse, that a report would be submitted to the Director, recommending discontinuation of the service in the area, and if feasible a staff reshuffle would be arranged, should the Director accept the recommendation submitted. In fact, such recommendations were placed before the Director half a dozen times during the life of the projects and such reshuffles did occur.

In discussion between members of the executive and other organizations, it was considered that such projects should be planned for from 3-5 years, with continuance depending on assessment of the situation prior to the prospective end date. However, at no stage were arbitrary times fixed; decisions in all cases were based on continuous evaluation of changing circumstances, made in every case by professional members of the project staff.

The task of the visiting nurse was educative and facilitative. This situation was possible because, while there were often inadequate medical services of one sort or another in the area, the Ministry did not see its job as supplementing these. When Aborigines were able to and were in fact using the existing services, then the Ministry's job was seen to be done. Help could and would be forthcoming to assist Aborigines to add their pressure to demands for improved medical services. In this case the Aborigines were merely acting as other members of the geographic community wishing to improve local facilities for all members of the community. The Ministry saw its role as ensuring that Aborigines could participate on an equal footing with other members of the society. While this policy paid dividends in many instances to both Aborigines and others in the community it was often, however, not a popular policy especially amongst Aborigines in either its early or even later stages. In fact the Director found it necessary to state publicly on a number of occasions that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was not in a popularity contest.

There exists an enormous motivational deficit within the Aboriginal community, through generations of mistrust and negative experience with non-Aborigines (including medical and para-medical service personnel.) This makes it necessary initially to provide services beyond those available for non-Aborigines and staff frequently had to face what has come to be referred to as "white backlash". This backlash was seen in several forms. Firstly from medical personnel. Doctors want to deal with and treat Aborigines in the same way as they treat other people. They expect their directions to be obeyed ('I told the woman to take those tablets') and were not perplexed but blindly incensed when she returned without even having had the prescription filled.

Doctors expect their patients to behave appropriately towards them; not only to follow instructions but to state their symptoms, wait until they can see them, be punctual for
appointments, and so on. Frequently in some areas the failure of Aborigines to meet these expectations caused quite serious problems with the medical profession. Local doctors and ward sisters frequently failed to understand what the Ministry was getting at when it pressed its policy of responsibility.

There was, and often still is, a lack of awareness that people need the opportunity to waste precious resources, including the doctor's time, etc., if they are to learn to use these properly. Some of the backlash was well founded. Doctors and nurses saw Aboriginal patients who were hopeless, in their terms, and whom they could see wasting taxes on help they seemed not to be using, even extra nursing staff who were not easing the burdens of other professional people working in the area, but rather seemed to be creating more problems. From its inception, the programme was designed to provide education for non-Aborigines as an essential part of the success of the project and an example of this activity will be given.

Visiting Nurse Role:
The visiting nurse carried literature on general health, child care and the like which she used educationally in face-to-face individual contact with mothers and other members of the family. Sometimes she would run group sessions on specific health topics, perhaps providing films and discussions and making the programme a social event.

The visiting nurse made contact with all the medical and para-medical services in the community. She got to know doctors, hospitals, dentists, welfare centre sisters and local nursing services. In her contacts with Aborigines she acted as a source of information about available health services. This process went so far in one area as to have Ministry staff undertaking a local directory of health and welfare services with the area regional hospital, which was subsequently published for distribution in the region. Thus, the all-encompassing nature of the broad-spectrum programme was transferred down to the operation of the specific short term intervention project.

Some Other Staff Roles:
Not only the visiting nurse, but the area social worker (and where field officers, that is non-social worker members of the field staff, were on the team they also participated) made contact with the local community. Here the purposes were numerous. Essentially it was recognized that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities needed to be involved in any change affecting both. Too often in the past, attempts at change had been directed at the Aborigines without an awareness that a change in Aborigines affects their relationships with the rest of the community, and without community support for the change it was often short-lived. Therefore, the social worker and field officer made contact with service groups, businessmen, professional groups, with the mass media, with women's groups and with schools, and always with a view to establishing contact and providing better communication channels and imparting information about Aboriginal affairs and Ministry programmes.
Case Illustrations

Case Illustration (1): An Example of Planned Intervention Technology in a Specific Crisis:

An example of the need for such complex relationships and of the orientation of the project can be seen in an episode where a group of Aboriginal children were sent home from school by their teacher because they had nits in their hair. In times past, such an occurrence would have been followed by the Aboriginal Affairs Department nurse, perhaps with the help of a locally based nurse from another government or municipal service, going out to families with the necessary headwash and washing the heads of the children. This would have been done probably with the parents' consent and would have been done for the parents. On this occasion, Ministry nursing staff were explicitly instructed that they were (as was usual by 1969) under no circumstances to carry the headwash or to wash any child's head.

The organization had been geared for just such an event. The teacher rang the Ministry and the visiting nurse spoke to the teacher, who then contacted the school medical service. The school medical service sent parents their standard letter informing them of the usual treatment for nits. The visiting nurse also ran demonstrations at the local school for several classes, using the 'park bench' skit. The visiting nurse took literature to parents and discussed how parents could deal with the nits and thus get the heads clean. The visiting nurse also contacted local pharmacies and stores to ensure that they had supplies of the necessary pharmaceutical products. The area social worker discussed the situation with head office and obtained confirmation of his position. The organization was thereby alerted to possible pressure from other government agencies concerned, in this instance Health and Education. These agencies were contacted and the Ministry's philosophy explained, cooperation was sought and with some reservations (in view of the apparent novelty of the request) was obtained.

In Victoria, the Education Department Truancy Officer was responsible for warning parents that if they do not send their children to school they can be taken to court and fined, which is the usual procedure. The Truancy Officer in this area had done this on many occasions. The courts and the women police must also be understanding if such a procedure is to be effective, and in this area the long, poor history of the relationships between Aborigines and non-Aborigines was making less effective Ministry staff efforts to work with these organizations. The problem here is that if the Court will not treat the Aboriginal parents in the same manner as they treat any other parent (that is, as responsible for their children) then the pressure on the parent to meet the normally expected behaviour standards can break down. (Community sanctions are no longer present.) Thus it can be seen that at any time during a broad spectrum programme it may be necessary to operate at several levels in the structure simultaneously with several groups in order to maintain the integrity of the total programme.

The social worker and field officer in this instance explained both to the local schools and to the parents the Ministry's perception of the responsibilities involved. Up to a point there was understanding that if anyone was to usurp the Aboriginal parents' responsibility by intervening to wash the children's hair they would be silently communicating that Aborigines were second-rate citizens and were thus not expected to be able to care for
their children as were other citizens of the community. It seemed clear that such an action would reinforce the poor image and destroy still further the self-confidence and dignity of Aboriginal parents and would thus not be a constructive measure, either for public health education or for the families concerned.

The Ministry stressed that the few days lost from school were negligible compared to the massive change in attitude and behaviour that could result from Aboriginal parents being treated with the same respect and expectation of responsibility as other people. The technique worked. The Aboriginal parents themselves took the necessary action with regard to their children. This was the first time that they had done so. Not only did the Aboriginal people themselves gain strength from this experience but the Ministry staff, with some local people involved and staff from some of the other government departments all felt that they had gained some useful understanding of community health processes.

There were other instances of this sort, but this one will suffice to demonstrate the need for short-term intervention projects to be built inside a wide spectrum of programmes which cut across the whole of life of all of the people involved in the interventive situation. This incident also shows more starkly the need for competent professional staff and well-integrated teamwork from grassroots to senior executive level in the organization. Occasionally, such an incident can require the support of the Minister involved. Typical of the educationally-focused intervention technology planned by the Ministry and implemented by the visiting nurse are the following two examples.

Case Illustration (2): Introduction of a Mother to the Regular Use of an Infant Welfare Centre (Behaviour Shaping):

As the Ministry did not believe that any dependency-creating activity should be justified, any helping action had to be supported by an expectation that it was necessary to ensure its own eventual redundancy. Therefore, the visiting nurse would begin by discussing children and child care with the mother, and come round to the point of suggesting assistance from the Infant Welfare Centre. Once the mother was interested and willing to work with the visiting nurse to help her children get better care and attention, the visiting nurse would make arrangements to take her and the baby to the Infant Welfare Centre. She would drive the mother there, take her in and introduce her to the Infant Welfare sister. She knew the sister reasonably well by this time. Infant Welfare Centre sisters were usually co-operative and sympathetic. They understood the difficulties that Aboriginal mothers had faced in the past in their contact with European professionals. These meetings were effective at the first contact because a considerable amount of work had been done by the visiting nurse with the Infant Welfare Centre sister prior to the visit. For example, in one area an Infant Welfare Centre sister had been known to open her window when an Aboriginal mother came into the room with her child. Many Infant Welfare sisters were impatient and exasperated with Aboriginal mothers because of their understandable lack of knowledge and apparent lack of understanding.

After the first successful visit was completed and mother and child safely and happily home, the next visit would be planned with the mother. With each succeeding visit some of the support was withdrawn. At first the mother was reminded of appointments by the visiting nurse and transported there by her. Slowly the mother gained confidence.
She would still occasionally go with the visiting nurse but saw the Infant Welfare sister alone; then as she gained sufficient confidence she reached the stage of being dropped off at the Centre and finally went under her own steam. Sometimes the visiting nurse reminded her of dates and specific immunization programmes. In the end, most mothers did not even require this contact with the visiting nurse. They fully organized their Infant Welfare Centre visits and, when this process was regularly established and carried over to a new child without visiting nurse aid, the process was considered completely successful. The visiting nurse had become redundant in regard to this aspect of health behaviour in the family. The model is a simple learning model. It is built around rational understanding and meaningful emotional support. It bridges the knowledge and understanding gap between the two cultures. (The process described above could take as little as six or as much as 48 months.) In some areas, the process is still nowhere near complete, especially in areas where services are deficient, where remoteness is a factor, where a long history of inability to utilize services or advance towards utilization of medical services exists there is still nowhere near adequate development of independent responsibility towards health behaviour.

Case Illustration (3): Use of Health Services:
A simple process of health service education was implemented in regard to the utilization of local medical and dental services and for appointments to regional and city medical and dental hospitals, and for outpatient and specialist attention. The process began with all arrangements being made by the visiting nurse and staff. The patient was slowly assisted to take over the making of all arrangements himself, until the patient made all the arrangements including his own travel and found his way through Melbourne, at first with the help of maps and other aids, and finally alone or with a friend. Again a supportive technique using slowly withdrawn resources from around the client and backed by educational process was used here effectively. Social learning theory can thus be effectively applied in broad-spectrum social change programmes.

I will briefly mention only one other facet of the Ministry’s health and education programme which relates to the issue of payment of bills.

Case Illustration (4): Payment of Medical Accounts:
It had in at least one area of the state become the accepted practice for medical, para-medical and hospital services not to issue accounts to Aborigines. So much so, that Aborigines had begun to assume that the government, forever accepting paternal responsibility for Aborigines, was paying. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs began an intensive Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal attitude-education campaign. It is by now a well documented fact in social science especially in social psychology that no simple and consistent relationship exists between attitudes and behaviour, and this must be kept in mind. However, pragmatic thinking people seem able to overcome this minor academic obstacle. They do so by the simple expedient of assuming that a real (observable or demonstrable) change in actual behaviour and practice will lead to the development of actual changes in expectations and that finally a new adjustment will exist, wherein the original expected behaviour and practice will he changed and so will the attitudes about those expectations, behaviours and practices. What this means in
simple terms can be seen from the following illustration. The doctor or a hospital does not send an account to an Aborigine —
(a) because he/it expects to get no payment (Aborigines are poor);
(b) because he/it is unwilling to provoke public opinion by taking a poor, discriminated-against Aborigine, to court;
(c) because of a belief that he/it ought not to enforce payment.

Whatever the reason, the outcome of this behaviour is clear:
Outcome 1: It silently communicates to Aborigines that they are not expected to meet the same requirements as other citizens. Because of the low social status of Aborigines such a message is destructive to pride and dignity in that —
(a) it reinforces the white conviction of Aboriginal inability to pay (often false); and
(b) it reinforces the Aboriginal conviction of inadequacy (translated often by them as their ability to ‘fool whitey’). Unfortunately, because Aboriginal identity is so much a part of the social structure even those whose intent is to be helpful make an error in assuming their generosity can be seen in some other way. This explanation comes in a multitude of disguises because, when a social group is stigmatized by the whole community, no action can be taken on an isolated instance which does not react on the whole.

Outcome 2: Quite apart from the silent messages, it keeps or traps the Aborigine outside the ‘normal’ social structure, the ‘normal’ expected behaviour patterns of the community, and thus makes their relationship to the community and its institutions unequal.

Outcome 3: Such subtle discriminatory mechanisms have negative spin-off. Not just in the area in which they apply, for example here we are speaking of non-expectation of the payment of accounts, but in other related and unrelated areas of activity. That is, the underlying attitudes and assumptions affect both other Aborigines and whites in similar and dissimilar situations, because attitudes and expectations traverse specific situations and cross into other situations — housing, education, etc. It is a state of mind that must be attacked uniformly and in all areas of social functioning if the attack is to be effective: hence my use of the term ‘broad-spectrum programming’.

There are other equally penetrating issues, but these few points indicate the nature of the situation. The author takes up some of the other issues elsewhere.

Therefore, in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs’ approach to the health project the planned short-term intervention was specific, direct and goal-oriented. The area social worker, supported where necessary by his senior officer, and sometimes by the Director himself, entered into communication with people in the local area. Contact was made both with individuals and groups and they were encouraged to treat Aborigines as they would other members of the community. In these contacts the harmful effects of subtle discrimination were discussed in the light of the long term interests of the community. The area social worker, the visiting nurse and other staff also entered into discussions with Aboriginal people along similar lines. The Ministry consciously shifted itself from
the position of paternally protecting the Aboriginal people, yet continued to provide realistic help to them to cope with the slowly changing expectations. For example:
(a) Encouraging families to understand the purpose and benefit of joining Hospital Benefits Association or making sure the family was enrolled with the Commonwealth Medical Benefits Scheme for low income families.
(b) Where the family or an individual needed medical aid and was in financial difficulty they were helped to enter into discussions with doctors and hospitals about their financial situation, realistically, before the embarrassing business of accounts began.
(c) If a court case regarding medical bills seemed to be inevitable, advice re legal assistance would have been given. In fact, I cannot cite any specific instance where this situation was reached, although I believe there are at least one or two instances on record.

The effect of this change and the total approach was a new set of consistently supported messages both direct and indirect to Aboriginal people and the development of new patterns of behaviour and expectation by both groups. I cannot cite detailed instances here, but the comments made by staff and the notes on case files demonstrate there that an actual change has begun. The change is in the behaviour and expectations by Aborigines and non-Aborigines, doctors and hospitals, and the change is expressed meaningfully in the statement of several of the visiting nurses that Aborigines now feel more confident about using the services as a right and are less at the mercy of those service personnel than before.

There have also been some comments from hospital administration and doctors to Ministry staff, including that they not only feel different and happier about the situation than before, but that they notice a real difference in the attitude of staff and Aborigines to their services. Today there are more general expectations by both Aborigines and medical services that accounts will be presented and paid. With the recognition of the limited strength of these statements is indicative of the effectiveness of the programme nevertheless in the situation of a government department operating as the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was the range of comment sources is suggestive of effectiveness.

Case Illustration (5): A Specific TB Education Project:
During the era of the Aborigines Welfare Board, the Health Department T.B. branch, had requested and obtained from the Board assistance to bring in Aborigines for Mantoux tests and B.C.G. immunization in various areas throughout the state. This was felt necessary because of the low immunity Aboriginal communities in Australia have as yet built up toward T.B. It has been found that the Aboriginal incidence of T.B. is significantly greater by several hundred percent than the general population, for the reasons stated above, and for other health reasons relating to the development of immunity to the disease.

After the ministry had begun to implement its changed approach to Aboriginal affairs, it was again approached by the Health Department T.B. branch to repeat the campaign in 1972 to ensure that the younger generation was immunized. The Ministry suggested, in the light of its changed approach, that it would not be appropriate to physically
transport Aborigines as had been done before, but that Aborigines should be given the necessary information at a meeting organized by the Ministry at which the Head of the T.B. Branch would introduce them to the facts, dangers, etc. of T.B., and the need for the project. Then, through literature — individual letters, newsletter and Ministry staff contact — dates and places for Mantoux tests and B.C.G. would be arranged and families encouraged to attend. Such a procedure was seen as treating Aborigine people with the necessary dignity and respect and avoiding the destructive paternalism of the past. It was realized that this method may not obtain the desired health outcomes to the same degree of the older procedure, but the Ministry was optimistic and the Health Department, though understandably cautious, willingly consented to cooperate. To be brief, the outcome was less satisfactory than had been hoped for, that is, a small percentage of the people turned up. However, one relevant variable intrudes. Just before the special project, the regular T.B. X-ray programme was held in the area and many of the Aborigines later approached indicated that they and their families had attended this normal community programme which they preferred to the special one arranged exclusively for them.

Case illustrations are numerous but these should suffice to illustrate the elements of short-term intervention projects. The assumptions have been outlined and they relate, as can be perceived, to the rational and to the emotional aspects of the situation.

1. Aborigines should be treated as equals.
2. Aborigines should be treated as people.
3. Aborigines should not be subjected to dependency-creating handouts or paternalism.
4. Aborigines should be encouraged to utilize their natural abilities in making use of the opportunity in the community to meet their needs.
5. Aborigines should not be subject to forms of subtle destructive discrimination.

The methods employed follow from the aims and assumptions established. Once the goals are specified it is necessary to plan all activities so as to meet the terms of the objectives and to stand behind the values involved. This frequently meant that the Ministry faced the criticism from people it was established to serve and from other well-intentioned people. It weathered the storms in a multitude of ways, some of which may be described in later monographs. It successfully showed that a government bureaucracy can give real leadership in the development of new and creative methods of social intervention through effective social planning.

Client Involvement

The question of client participation in health as in all programmes is a vexed and contentious one. The Ministry programme was not established or designed by Aborigines but by non-Aborigines. There is nothing condemnatory or inappropriate about this. Victorian Aborigines, at the time the Ministry was established, lacked the education and the experience to establish a department, its goals or its methods. Add to this the fact that the Ministry had two populations as its targets for change — Aborigines and non-Aborigines. A series of structural and functional steps established a communication link with Aboriginal people and with non-Aborigines, both relatively appropriate to the group to be contacted. As far as the health programme was concerned, the client group
was seen as:
(a) medical and para-medical service personnel
(b) Aboriginal individuals and families
(c) general community.

Contact with (a) medical and para-medical personnel, was through individual contact, although in some instances meetings were held with numbers of such persons present.

The same situation applied to (b) Aboriginal individuals and families, with some publications and articles by newsletters established between the Ministry and the Aboriginal community in Victoria; also Aboriginal opinion was sought and expressed at regular consultations; Aboriginal staff members, including an Aboriginal visiting nurse, raised issues related to the functioning of the health project; the Commonwealth government convened national health conferences relating to Aborigines and these were attended by Aborigines; the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Council with its Aboriginal membership commented frequently on health matters; also home visits by social work staff regularly raised matters of health and these were fed back into the planning and practice of the intervention teams. For example, during a home visit a social worker talks with a woman who says that she knows about a balanced diet and that children get thrush if bottles are not sterilized. However, she doesn’t sterilize bottles nor does she feed her family a balanced diet.

Contact with (c) general community, was through occasional communication with the mass media from the Director or Minister, and through communication to groups of people in the community at speaking engagements, and public education programmes run by one or other of the members of the field staff.

One wishes to say that no programme or project will actually assist the client if the client is not an active participant. Whilst this value position is heavily supported by the professional social worker, the facts show that this frequently occurs anyway. The desirability or feasibility of client participation in planning and evaluation and how participation can be achieved is another issue. This subject is well- aired in the literature of the past five or six years from the United States and the United Kingdom and will not be further discussed in this study except to say that client involvement in Ministry projects while being more than mere tokenism is short of real control over their situation.

Assessment and Termination
Any intervention project must face this issue: what sort of assessment? When to make it? How? It is not really so complicated if the impossible is not attempted. Every social work intervention project is a living experiment. In this case, political necessity demanded that prompt and practical action be taken to deal with a specific problem and the objectives have been stated. When, as a result of the continuing assessment held with teams in each area by the supervising social worker, it was believed that the continued activity of visiting nurses was not justifiable (because the Aboriginal people had made as much use of her in relation to the project goals as seemed meaningful at the time), then the nature of the evidence was submitted to the Director with
recommendations for termination of visiting nurse activity in the geographic area concerned. In two areas, when the visiting nurse left, that part of her role that was still required was successfully continued by staff remaining in the area.

In one area two assessments were made, each lasted for two days and involved the supervising social worker, senior sister, visiting nurse, education officer, area social worker, assistant area social worker and Aboriginal liaison officer. In this area it was finally decided that the visiting nurse had reached the point where most of the Aboriginal families could use the available medical services as well as most of the non-Aboriginal families, that is her work had reached a point of diminishing return.

A major re-evaluation of the whole area programme was thus undertaken and at this time the team had been working together for nearly four years. As a result, a major staff withdrawal was made and significant responsibility transferred into the hands of an Aboriginal liaison officer and the Aboriginal people themselves. It was felt that the first necessary stage of help to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people had been made available. The two communities had made positive use of it and development could proceed without the same degree of concentrated outside aid that had previously seemed so necessary to both Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the town.

Thus, as a result of continuing assessments, a point of termination was reached by the Ministry staff and the decision to act made by the Director on the advice he received. The fact is that neither Aboriginal nor white clients were fully consulted and this has frequently been a point of contention within the organisation and without.

Eight Items Used in the Assessment:
1. No./percentage of children immunized (and how achieved)
2. No./percentage of mothers obtaining pre- and post-natal care initially and presently
3. No./percentage of persons able to initiate and carry through arrangements for and attendance at local and metropolitan clinics and hospitals
4. No./percentage of families enrolled and regularly paying hospital and medical benefits or enrolled in free government schemes for low income families (if eligible).
5. No./percentage of doctors and para-medical hospital services who send accounts to Aborigines, except them to be paid and will pursue their Aboriginal bad-payers in an identical manner to their non-Aboriginal bad-payers.
6. Modification in diet, nutrition and eating habits of adults and children (food buying).
7. Modification in home hygiene, home care and cleanliness.
8. No./percentage of Aboriginal families regularly using T.B. X-ray and other public health campaigns without reminding.

In conclusion, health programmes were goal/task oriented. They followed the overriding policy values; they were pervasive and institutional rather than residual; they were normative; they were demonstrably successful in several areas on the criteria selected, more so in some than in others. In health, as in other major areas, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs financed outside research by the Health Department and by an independent medical research organization in order to develop greater knowledge of
morbidity and health service usage. Health programmes demonstrate, perhaps more spectacularly than others, the outcomes of the practice of planned social intervention.

This brings to an end the data presented. Only a few illustrations of the operations of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs have been described as can be clearly perceived from an examination of the fifty or so programmes involved in the total. The huge time allocation to the casework and social work/field work contact operation and the fascinating programmes associated with consultations where 50-100 Aboriginal people from each geographic area met with 3-5 staff members of the Ministry and discussed the Ministry programmes for the year and their feeling about Ministry policy and activities; these sessions were immeasurably valuable and informative. However, the three programmes outlined in some detail demonstrate the nature of the intervention technology of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and also highlight some of the policy issues that exist. It has been the intention so far to paint out with a broad sweep the sort of intervention programmes that have characterized Aboriginal Affairs in this state since its settlement. The next chapter will proceed to make some critical assessment of the Aborigines Welfare Board and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs against the theoretical framework outlined earlier and in the light of the data provided. Some issues for future consideration will be suggested.

SUMMARY OF MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS INTERVENTION

Contact and Assessment Phase
The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs can be said to begin, not on 1/1/68 but in May when its first and only Director was appointed. Until that time the previous superintendent carried on in a caretaker role.

The presenting situation was explicated by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in terms which were considerably wider and more pervasive than before. To begin with the goal of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was to promote the social and economic advancement of Aborigines in Victoria and saw its responsibility in terms of race relations. This meant that the presenting situation was comprised of both the Victorian Aboriginal community and the non-Aboriginal community because it saw the issue as being two-fold. For Aborigines social and economic advancement was needed to enable them to compete equally with non-Aborigines, and for the non-Aboriginal community education to accept Aborigines into its social, economic, sporting, political and other institutions. It saw a necessity to consider Aboriginal individuals and families but also to consider groups of Aborigines in geographic areas, many of whom were becoming vocal. The Ministry also was able to see the statewide community and its importance to Aboriginal people, the existence of Aboriginal organizations, and it saw all these levels relating to the major life problems of health, housing, employment, education, sport, social life, legal problems, social services, and the implications of two communities having to relate constructively one with the other. It thus saw as important three major partners in this problem situation: Government, Aborigines and non-Aborigines. Thus, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs found itself, in its perception, confronting an entirely different problem
situation to that which the Aborigines Welfare Board had confronted. Many of the specific elements were the same.

The presenting situation and the Ministry interfaced as they did; in part, as a result of the expanded data from the Aborigines Welfare Board; in part, as a result of the perception of the new Director; in part, as a result of the current attitude of government toward Aboriginal affairs, both at the state level and the new Commonwealth level. Also involved was the growing national awareness of the Aboriginal people, of their rights and the extent of their disadvantage. There existed a belief about their ability to act effectively within the total Australian society and there were the international pressures about minority race inequality, especially from U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand. The problem was still being defined by the Government.

There was some expression of its problem nature by Aborigines but in 1968 this was not very militant nor explicit. It became more so during the following four years.

It was also possible in 1968 for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to use the now available data to identify as potential client systems Aboriginal individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations, and the data sources, especially Annual Reports, files and news cuttings, indicate the focus of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as on social functioning and the orientation as specifically toward the individual Aborigines in the situation.

Whilst the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs saw Aborigines at all levels as the potential client systems, it saw both Aborigines and non-Aborigines as target systems and because it sought to make Aborigines responsible for their actions, it saw the necessity to make some form of contract (not in those terms). It said things like . . . 'Aborigines must be consulted before arrangements to do . . . are made' , and this is just such a contractual base as enables an organization to legitimise its actions through the client system. (it is of course possible to take implicit agreement as negotiated explicit agreement and act as though it was the latter.) A great deal of criticism was directed toward the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs because it was claimed that this was the case and that negotiations were mere tokenism.)

The major constraints on the Ministry were entirely different from any which had applied earlier. The political and social climate was ready for significant change and there was no immediate shortage of finance, any constraints were more practical. For example staff were needed to develop and work up new initiatives, experienced staff who would be able to implement a wide range of novel programmes in a short time; time itself was needed. The limitations of an annual budget that permitted less than nine months to implement ideas generated six months earlier and Administrative back up staff to establish machinery to support new field programmes was required. Sometimes the public service machinery itself slowed the process. There ultimately proved to be constraints of size, extent and speed with which what were seen as essential programmes, could be implemented. The frame of reference or the new Ministry was wider than its capacity to act, and as it acted and brought in new resources from both state and commonwealth, the visible needs escalated creating a new set of problems for management. Seen in retrospect the constraints were very
different to those of the Aborigines Welfare Board. The constraints were felt because of the Ministry's decision to implement programmes at all levels of human system for all ages for as many life areas as possible. Lack of interventive technology itself became a constraint of some magnitude.

Action Plan Phase

The state was divided into regions and teams headed by a social worker with a nurse, an Aboriginal liaison officer and other social workers and support staff were backed by a centralised property staff and centralised administration. For each programme it was seen as necessary for local teams to communicate the opportunity available to the local Aboriginal community and to act simultaneously with the local white community to ensure no negative reactions undermined the programme. Back-up assistance from a central public relations unit was available to support this process. The outcome goals were established centrally (e.g. individual programmes were seen as providing counselling help to compensate for the disorientation or conflicts which arose from programmes at other levels, and the method goals were seen as individual counselling provided by area social workers and where necessary other staff. A sort of safety valve programme for change programmes at other levels as well as support for aspects of some areas, e.g. health, employment. Family programmes included housing, employment, education, etc. Method goals were usually proposed as opportunities which families could make use of if they wished and field staff were used to communicate about the programmes and to assist families to make use of them. Sometimes the co-operation of other organizations, government and non-government, was sought as part of the method goal sometimes groups in the wider community would be involved.

At the group level a variety of outcome goals were established, e.g. in the employment area to assist a group of young school leavers to enter the work force, sometimes with students to assist them to relate to and mix with non-Aborigines in camps, sometimes to locate opinion about situations from local people. Method frequently involved the use of relationships and persuasion based on government access to material resources, and used established relationships, knowledge and expertise.

The community level outcome goals were frequently to do with the quality of life with health or social attitudes... e.g. mounting a local T.B. campaign, using local people to break down prejudice by a publican, changing the life style of a settlement, and the method goals were frequently team-based experiential programmes requiring relationships to have been established, knowledge, expertness and control over information.

At the organizational level outcome goals were related to the establishment of Aboriginal organizations, Self-help groups, to achieve programmes similar to non-Aboriginal organizations. The method goals frequently involved persuasion, inducements, material resources, knowledge, etc. Throughout most of these programmes the contract as far as there were contracts were with Aborigines.

The contracts were often inadequately explicit with little mutual accountability worker to client.
The Action Plan phase for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs involved an assessment of the congruence of the proposed goals with the notion that the outcome must be based on the belief that for the Aboriginal people dignity, self-respect, equality lay both in the ability of Aborigines to understand and participate in the life of the total society and in the likelihood that the specific outcome goals would help achieve this. This meant that frequently the agreements of the Aborigines was implicit, based on the assumption that they needed to and ultimately wanted equality and that effective participation in the system was the only practical route to achieve it. The congruence between the understanding of the Aborigines involved and that of the European government was often more in principle therefore than in the specific objectives of a particular programme, e.g. the Aborigines actual statements about wanting equality with their neighbours led to the removal of the rent subsidy yet it could hardly be claimed that they wanted the removal of the rent subsidy. However, they accepted the method goal to some extent as a means to achieve greater equality (the outcome goal). This illustrates an extreme case. Numerous less extreme ones have been cited previously. The other method used by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to obtain Aboriginal legitimacy for programmes was to obtain the approval of the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Council (A.A.A.C.) which represented the total Aboriginal community.

Implementation Phase

Because of its perspective of the situation, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs saw the need for an extensive range of programmes and the multiple action systems created by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs were also complex. They were created continuously as new aspects of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs programme were developed and negotiated with the Aboriginal community. Frequently they involved employing new staff and establishing new resources, bringing together people with differing backgrounds. For example the pre-school programme required the employment of two trained and experienced pre-school teachers. It involved meetings with people in pre-school teacher training and programme management, from government and semi-government instrumentalities. Also needed was the co-operation of the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs and local groups of citizens running pre-schools as well as public education material for Aboriginal families. It was necessary as well to establish internal machinery to cope with two new field staff.

With the health programme the major action system was comprised of the nursing staff who established networks of local health personnel, doctors, infant welfare centre sisters, local hospital personnel, District nursing service, local pharmacies, Melbourne specialist hospitals, to enable them to develop their programmes of parent education. They also were tightly linked in with their local team headed by the social worker responsible for the region and to their senior sister both of whom reported to the supervising social worker and thence to the Director. A tightly integrated action system thus enabled programmes to operate congruently in any part of the state.

The importance of congruence across the state, of getting the Aboriginal community to make use of the same services as the non-Aboriginal community, and of getting the two groups to meet and interact, were continually stressed. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was not to develop specialised services for Aborigines except temporarily, for
the purpose of helping them to use the usual community services. The programme is most easily conceptualised in terms of two systems, Aborigines and non-Aborigines, needing differential inputs to enable boundary permeability between them. When non-Aboriginal medical systems could be helped to understand the needs of Aborigines and when Aborigines could be helped to make appropriate use of these, one of the barriers between the two communities would be partially removed. This was seen to be likely to happen at several system levels at different times e.g. individuals, families, some local groups, or even Aboriginal sporting or other organizations. Likewise some individual medical units — doctors, hospitals, etc. — every occasion when a change in the desired direction occurred in either system at any level, this was a constructive move, from the point of view of the Ministry and advanced the contract toward establishing equality.

With the Ministry action system so complex and with so many elements, the failure of elements of the administrative system was frequently the source of a major crisis.

What was needed was a monitoring process that monitored not only change in the various clients but also in the administrative system. An illustration of monitoring that broke down is the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs house rental system. Whilst the rent arrears were monitored monthly and local social work staff supplied with figures to try and help families to keep payment up it was 18 months before a check through the administrative process showed that numerous tardy payers were never followed up except occasionally by the social work staff. There had been no local agent appointed so if the family did not MAIL its rent to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, it was not collected. Monitoring of the administrative system can be as crucial as monitoring of other aspects of Target and Action System activity. Likewise on the house rental issue the Ministry established numerous contact arrangements with tenants, none, some or all of which necessarily involved a family on a regular basis. These contacts could be a social worker or member of the nursing staff, a liaison officer or a property officer.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs set up an extensively mainly non-quantitative monitoring system which was comprised of the following elements.

1. Annually the whole staff met for a week to review programmes in every area in the state.
2. Annually a meeting of Aborigines for 2-3 days was convened in Melbourne to get some state wide feedback from a limited representation of Aboriginal people.
3. Annually a meeting (consultation) was called in each of the seven regions in the state. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs staff and all Aborigines living in the region were invited to attend for a full day and programmes, complaints, criticisms were aired.
4. Monthly the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Council met to discuss problems and future plans.
5. Monthly senior staff met with the Director to review all programmes for which problems were known to exist. Usually a half-day meeting.
6. Monthly all field staff met in Melbourne for a day to review activities throughout the state region by region.
7. Every second month all nursing staff met with the senior sister to review the health programme.

8. Every second month a full programme of individual staff supervision was undertaken by the Supervising Social Worker in the different regions to monitor work at individual, family and group levels.

9. Weekly senior central administrative and professional staff met with the Director to monitor overall programme management issues and budgets.

10. Daily the Director, A/D and Supervising Social Worker met briefly to follow the implications of news items, and current crises and issues as well as to plan new programmes.

Some of the monitoring was quantitative, e.g. Housing:
- number of families housed by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Housing Commission of Victoria in rental accommodation.
- number of families housed by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Housing Commission of Victoria in purchase accommodation.
- families with rental arrears and the patterns were monitored.
- waiting lists were monitored numerically.
- annual checks were made of the state wide picture of Aboriginal accommodation and estimates of future need established.

Property maintenance costs were monitored numerically as were rental problems likely to lead to eviction. Considerable but not very functional classification in various categories was made for these, i.e.
- whether both partners were Aboriginal;
- number of children and their ages;
- employment status of breadwinner;
- family income sources and amount;
- region in which they lived; etc.

Similar numerical monitoring occurred for health programmes:
- number of families in each region using medical services; attending immunization programmes, infant welfare centres;
- number of families and individuals making their own appointments to Melbourne doctors, hospitals and dentists. Again a mass of quantitative data was collected regularly but the implications of the data for programme and organisation modification always came back to non-quantative appraisals. As a single illustration, ten families in one area had, during one quarter, begun to use the Infant Welfare Centre. The local visiting nurse was, however, quite sure they saw no point in the activity but were involved because she had established a sound working relationship with them. The numbers alone could not tell us whether a programme was reaching a point where staff need not continue.

Education, likewise, could and did provide annually interesting quantitative statistics. Age/grade levels, attendance levels and numbers of students in various high school forms.
Whilst all these statistical indicators helped in the evaluation for monitoring of programme activity and adjustment it was necessary to rely on vastly less precise qualitative information from field staff. The meaning of various bits of information often had to be teased out slowly and fragmentally until its implications could be solidified into some change or innovation in the operation of the programme or the organization.

Termination and Evaluation Phase

At the time the study was ended the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was still fully operational. Plans had, however, been frequently discussed for the termination of aspects (programmes and even task areas) of the Ministry and some programmes had been terminated. Likewise, considerable thought had been directed to evaluating the whole interventive process.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs analysed the situation as consisting basically of a deprived Aboriginal community and a non-accepting white community. The problem at all levels of human system seemed to the Ministry to be incapacity on the part of Aborigines to meet the expectations re minimum standards of the community in education, employment, housing, health, etc. It set out to develop programmes to compensate for the deficit and to fill in the gaps in knowledge, resources, skills, etc. Simultaneously it saw the non-Aboriginal community at all levels — individual, family, group, e.g. business, profession, society, sporting, local, legal, etc. as not accepting Aborigines as equals because of colour, standards and attitudes. It set out to establish public relations campaigns and contact experiences that would modify and alter these at all levels.

Does it show evidence of meeting these outcome goals? Does it, on inspection, appear to have made a sound analysis of the situation and established effective machinery for intervention?

Reference has already been made to some specific parts of the health and education programme that were terminated prior to November, 1972, and preparations were well advanced for termination of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affair's house rental programme and for the transfer of its functions to the Housing Commission of Victoria (the normal community agency for handling governmental rental houses). Likewise preparation for termination of the state-wide primary and secondary educational grants were well in hand at this time. Further, it is possible to evaluate most aspects of these three programmes with respect to outcome goal achievements and to examine to a limited extent the total picture of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affair’s intervention and its perception of the situation.

I will first consider the three programmes examined in some depth to determine the extent to which they reached their outcome goal.

The housing programme had several major elements which sought to ensure that Aboriginal people from all over the state, young, middle-aged and elderly, could improve their housing situation. The programme offered aid and opportunities for private rental, Ministry of Aboriginal Affair’s rental in isolated areas, and for families marginal by
Housing Commission of Victoria standards, Housing Commission of Victoria rental, and a grant scheme for families wishing to purchase. It also upgraded to normal community standard houses on the two settlements, before these were returned to the ownership of Aborigines. It offered accommodation for Aboriginal state wards, hostel accommodation for youngsters still at school in Gippsland, and for young itinerant workers in the metropolitan area. Whilst numerically it did not totally resolve the needs of the Aboriginal community in 1972, its spread of programmes met its criteria of universal opportunity for all sections of the population. It had housed in the four years at least as many persons as the previous ten years and the Rental Programme had raised the rental level to be comparable to the Housing Commission of Victoria, the state housing authority.

Its goal was to not create a new permanent duplicated system and so it had prepared detailed plans with the Housing Commission of Victoria to hand over its rental programme to them in such a way as to enable the same number of Aboriginal people to obtain housing. It had also taken steps to erase the deficit rent arrears problem and, at the time of writing this final draft, the Housing Commission of Victoria had taken over. Thus, while there remained a number of special needs and compensatory aid to Aborigines over housing, a major aspect of 'special' housing had been moved smoothly into the normal community system with safeguards built in through community funding and annual reports to ensure continued Aboriginal access to normal rental housing.

In regard to the issue of termination, here, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs recognised a responsibility existing between itself and the Aboriginal community as client system and was thus not terminating this relationship but reducing some of the implications of it. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had used part of itself as an Action System and this part was terminating its relationship with those Aborigines requiring rental housing. It was severing its relationship and transferring its activities to another Action System, the Housing Commission of Victoria, which would undertake all the functions of the previous action system carried out by the Ministry but no longer under the direct control of the Ministry.

An almost identical process was under way with the nurses and the Health Department. In specific areas, viz. the Murray Region, as a result of evidence that the patterns of infant welfare centre use, immunization, use of general specialist medical and para-medical services, were very close to the normal community pattern, the V.N. was withdrawn from the region during the period under study. This seems to indicate that some of the health objectives were being met. In these instances some members of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs staff terminated their relationship with the Aborigines in the area and the programme was phased out.

In education the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in association with Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund and the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs worked out an arrangement whereby the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs, through its secondary grants scheme, took over the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship
Fund programme at upper secondary level entirely during 1971 and the lower secondary the next year. In this instance the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, had been phased out and replaced by the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund had been replaced by the Commonwealth Department of Education. The Primary Scholarship was phased out over two years and not replaced. The Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund, was thus dismantled by agreement with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The termination of the relationship with Aborigines in various areas of the state was done in two separate steps to enable additional data on the effect of the scheme to be collected. It was. The final action of this semi-autonomous arm of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affair's educational Action System was to contract with an American firm of consultants to evaluate the Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund total programme. At the time of final writing, that study is complete and the report has been published. Again the outcome goals established by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs with regard to Aboriginal children reaching the same levels of attendance, same age/grade patterns, same percentages of students in upper high school, can be shown to have been substantially met by the end of 1972 as the (Aboriginal Education Incentive Scholarship Fund) phase down was entering its final year. Other aspects of the education programme designed by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs were continuing as their tasks were not seen as complete especially pre-school, research, adult education etc. Whether the quantitative indicators tell anything of importance is of course an unanswered issue.

A detailed overall appraisal of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affair's interventive strategies (because of the extent of its programmes) is clearly outside the scope of this study. However, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs made an analysis of the presenting situation which has been described in systems terms. With a perception of a complex situation covering a wide range of life areas, across the state, for all age levels, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs set up a multitude of action systems each designed to service specific outcome goals in the different areas and they were, to various degrees, successful. The complex action systems often involved other government departments, both state and commonwealth voluntary organizations and several categories of specialised staff, outside research consultants, consultant and specialist advising committees brought together for brief periods in particular areas, meetings with various local citizen groups and many other combinations of people. Organisations and groups were involved in meeting the method goals and outcome goals of the total programme. A clear relationship existed between the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs analysis of the situation, the contract goals established and the nature and extent of the action system. The fact of more direct control both of policy and administration as well as of vastly greater resources of staff, consultants and material resources, together with a task focus, and a group of experienced professional social workers from Director down, facilitated the operation of the Ministry in comparison to the Aborigines Welfare Board.

When the period of the study is considered it is apparent that considerable change is in evidence, the pace of change had increased as had its extensiveness. There were
nevertheless many existing deficiencies and many new growing problems and
dissatisfactions. Increasing comparison levels were causing strong feelings of
dissatisfaction amongst growing activist groups in the Aboriginal community in
Victoria, influenced also by groups in other states. The value base was shifting,
Aborigines were no longer seeking merely more programmes, they sought power and
control over the programmes. Dissatisfaction with the nature of the Ministry of
Aboriginal Affair’s legitimising process was rife. The Aboriginal Affairs Advisory
Council was seen not as a progressive but as a paternal and powerless organ.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was becoming unpopular amongst Aborigines and
was seen as inflexible, yet, against the background of the previous administration, the
Aborigines Welfare Board, it had appeared progressive and, to those employed in it,
almost the ultimate in flexible, forward looking, welfare administration.

In 1968 the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs defined the problem aspects of the situation
and by 1972 the Aboriginal community felt in a position to have more say in what was
defined as a problem than had been possible. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was
opposed because it was unclear how the government could retain control over their
programmes if they gave control to the Aboriginal people. They were also ambivalent
about the rationale for doing so, whilst it was called Aboriginal Affairs it was more
closely a race relations operation.

End Notes — Chapter 6

2. F. Lancaster Jones, The Structure and Growth of Australia’s Aboriginal Population
3. See Table 11 Appendix D for a table which summarizes extensively developments in population,
   finance, staff, housing and education 1958-1972.
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

The task of this final chapter is to link together some of the argument, concepts and findings in the preceding chapters. It will suggest:

(a) Some of the things that have been learned through the case study approach to the practice of social intervention in Aboriginal affairs.

(b) Some areas that might profitably be pursued to either extend our understanding of the interventive situation in Aboriginal affairs or extend our understanding of the considerations relevant to effective planning and implementation of intervention programmes in social welfare.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

It is reasonable to take the period 1834-1972 and consider it in four sections:

1. 1835-1886 Protection
2. 1886-1957 Partial Protection
4. 1968-1972 Affairs (Race Relations)

During the first two of these four periods the government intervention programmes were reactive, mainly controlled by a variety of political, social and economic pressures. The government was not attempting to control the change process. The first attempt to do so was in 1958. In 1968, however, the department ceased reacting to the conflicting values of various pressure groups and generated its own selected value base. The effect was to by-pass the process which had previously created compromises that failed. Consistent policy, clear and specific philosophy and system-wide acceptable objectives placed the government in some realistic degree of control of the change process. Government programmes, for the first time, were aimed consistently at influencing public opinion in a specific direction.

There is a suggestion that the implementation of broad-aim programmes such as described are more effective if consideration is given to comparative and expressed needs, concepts which permeate the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs programmes, than if response is to normative or felt needs. It was normative need concepts which characterized the period prior to 1968.

The acceptability of the normative pattern is slipping away. The trend is first to increase the expressed need. In the search for information about what was needed for planning, the Aboriginal people were asked to apply for housing rental and housing grants, for educational scholarships, for viable enterprise loans and for help in employment. They responded by putting their names on lists of various sorts and the size of the expressed needs was used to determine the necessary size of department budgets and programmes. Aborigines were asked more and more to express their felt needs in consultations, advisory councils and conferences. However, interventively the evidence suggests that this is a procedure of dubious value. The expression of
need by placing one's name on a waiting list can act to reduce frustration, the verbal expression of desire with no operational programme outcome is unlikely to have the same effect. This has relevance to the effective actions of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, particularly vis-a-vis the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Government objectives have changed through time. The concept of objectives and their achievement has become increasingly significant in social work intervention programmes as the shift from method to task has taken place. Today the increasing demands for accountability necessitate goal statements and measurement of the effectiveness of programmes to meet these goals. With increasing data on needs and greater input of resources and clearer statements of specific desirable objectives the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was able to support the effectiveness of its programme. Clearly broad-aim programmes, based on ideals that can be operationalized through time-limited projects using competent trained staff, can achieve stated goals. The vague generalizations of the past — for example, Christianize and civilize — required time periods so vast that though these goals were finally attained, it is not possible that specific projects which failed at the time can be credited as the cause. Further it is pointless to state organizational goals in ideal terms if the professional competence to implement these through specifically defined short-term projects is not available. Therefore failure to handle specific issues, such as rent arrears and evictions, can subvert the objectives of the total programme.

Dawson demonstrated in New South Wales that as Aborigines move from traditional to western views their comparison level rises. The Victorian rate of change is vastly in excess of that in the areas studied in New South Wales. It is interesting that Dawson expresses the opinion that (for a number of reasons related to the extremely permissive child-rearing process of the Aboriginal people) in spite of the demonstrable fact that comparison levels are rising and dissatisfaction increasing this would probably not result in overt acts of dissatisfaction. My opinion is that this is not so. In fact it is observable in Victoria that as the standard of living increases the child-rearing patterns adjust to the European model. This adjustment has the effect of assisting children and their parents to match their material standard of living and their expectations and so one can expect that overt acts of dissatisfaction will occur, and there is evidence in Victoria that this is so. In Victoria it might be argued that so long as the government continues to make available to the minority group genuine opportunity to participate in the tangible and intangible benefits of the wider society then the likelihood of disaffection spreading to any extent is reduced. It is, however, equally possible that the demands for more and ever more of the tangible and intangible benefits including control over policy and administration of programmes will outstrip the willingness of government, or perhaps the ability of the government, to make them available. It is important to add the observation that the rate of change itself is changing exponentially in this area and this adds to the increased difficulty in monitoring what is going on, what people are feeling and the ability of the formal organization, even one of extreme flexibility, to change at the needed rate.
Why did the Aborigines Welfare Board choose to employ a property officer and build houses rather than employ a community development staff and construct some developmental relationships? Because they believed that they had to show some tangible results quickly. Also they believed that the Aboriginal people would be happy and 'normal' if they were placed in proper housing. They did not accept the explanation that people create their environment on the basis of their image of themselves, nor did they face the fact that Aboriginal anomie was due to their isolation from the wider Australian society. It is worth commenting that neither the Aborigines Welfare Board nor Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs administration seemed to have made use of knowledge about past programmes. Whether the community development method could have been successfully employed in the circumstances remains unanswered. Certainly in other parts of Australia it remains a possible option.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs demonstrated that normative goals could be implemented, that if the two communities were involved in a programme simultaneously the boundaries between them at all levels could be breached.

I want to suggest that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was effective in its structural programmes because of its operational skills in the field. Its staff could cope with personal relationships in a manner which permitted tensions to be reduced, system imbalances to be righted and conflicts to be kept within tolerable limits.

Aborigines have been continuously alienated from the culture in the past, not associated with its norms and values, totally unable to influence its power structure.

The Aborigines Welfare Board began to establish some kind of relationship with the Aboriginal community; the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs began to demolish the boundaries between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and to establish normative programmes which were intended to end the alienation and isolation.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs believed that its role was to create a bridge between the two cultures; to assist Aboriginal development and European understanding. It believed that no permanent new structures or services should be established, that ultimately most of its functions would be taken over by the usual community services.

The logical development of this notion is that Aborigines must ultimately be responsible for any special services that are to be provided to the Aboriginal community as is any other group wishing to provide services to its members, either religious, ethnic or interest.

Continuing non-Aboriginal service functions should relate, then, to the normal community which includes Aborigines. If special Aboriginal servicing functions remain these ought be of a research, communication, educative, informational type. Handouts and paternalism are clearly inappropriate in relationships between peers.

However, in Aboriginal affairs only, and in no other area of the community, a special situation exists. Aborigines were the original inhabitants who were dispossessed. They do not as a community accept the right of non-Aborigines to have dispossessed them and
because Aborigines recognize European acts toward them as implicit acknowledgement of inequity some continuing provision will need to be made to deal with the reality that Aborigines in Australia are a very seriously disadvantaged minority today and that this is a direct result of the actions of the non-Aboriginal population. This will require that substantial funds from taxation will necessarily be made available in some form to the Aboriginal community. For the moment the apparent reasonableness of the argument that because someone's ancestors did something to someone else's ancestors we are not reasonably to be held to blame today does not hold.

GOALS OF THE STUDY

The first objective of the study was met in earlier chapters.

The second objective of the study has been partially met from the material in the past two chapters it now is required to complete a comparison and contrast and attempt to derive the basis for establishing some hypotheses about broad spectrum social interventive programmes.

To begin with, the perspective within which comparison is being made is important.

To compare the Aborigines Welfare Board and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs say in terms of the presenting situation shows the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to have been operating in a vastly expanded perceptual field. However, had I pointed out the situation of the Aborigines Protection Board and compared it to that of the Aborigines Welfare Board the dramatic expansion of perception of the Aborigines Welfare Board would have been almost as marked as the change from Aborigines Welfare Board to Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Likewise, if one was to proceed in to the future and compare the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs with the presenting situation as seen by the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs when it took over from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, another major dimensional shift would probably be observed. It is, therefore, important when attempting to draw conclusions from the significantly different pictures of the Aborigines Welfare Board and Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to establish some framework that keeps things in perspective, that is, in a larger frame of reference. Each organisation tends to establish an interventive process that is congruent with its perception of the presenting situation.

Likewise, the sequential nature of these two organisations in an increasingly concerned political environment is important. Some things do seem to precede others. In this problem area the development of an interventive programme in the micro area seems logically to precede working in the macro area and can almost be seen as the contact and assessment phase of a macro programme.

To compare and contrast the two organisations, out of their sequential perspective, appears to disadvantage the earlier one. In 1957 the Aborigines Welfare Board was working with very crude and inaccurate data. In 1968/9 the dimension of the problem was of another order. The knowledge about the nature of the Aboriginal Community in 1957 was primitive, in 1968 extensive, regionalised and detailed.
In 1957 the Aborigines Welfare Board had even by the standards of the period a small budget and few resources of manpower or expertise. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in 1968 by comparison had not only very generous resources from state funds but the promise of considerable Commonwealth money as well; had establishment for adequate professional staff in most categories it needed and a Director who was a professional social worker and who recruited a professional staff.

The Aborigines Welfare Board had an organisation structure that was crude, clumsy, ineffectively organised and which virtually precluded efficient organisational development. The structure was also new and therefore not flexible nor easily changed during the early years. In 1968 the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had an excellent organisational structure, complete control over its policy and administration, access to Cabinet, clear lines of authority.

The quality of leadership is significant. The Superintendent of the Board was not a senior appointment and was a man with limited power, experience or organisational ability. The Director of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, however, was a senior Departmental Head, Cabinet appointed, was an experienced social worker with organisational ability and tremendous energy and initiative: an appointment from a very competitive list of applicants for senior office.

The Aborigines Welfare Board grew in an environment of state concern — the result of local and vocal pressure groups but no strong national or international pressure and no powerful commitment to succeed. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs emerged into an environment of national and international racial urgency, where the commitment to succeed was strong and supported by resources; a vastly more viable political climate than in 1957.

In 1968 the comparison level of Aborigines in Victoria was rising fast and visibly, and the resultant dissatisfaction exerted continuous and escalating pressure on government to act effectively. Aborigines were mobile and willing and able to make use of political machinery which demanded a higher level of Government action than had been necessary in 1958 and also forced the Government to relate to them less paternalistically.

The Aborigines Welfare Board, with its data deficit, was not aware of the extensive interrelatedness of the many factors operating in the Aboriginal community. They were, during the first 5-7 years, able to operate on a "poor white" concept. In 1968 there was no possibility of this and the interrelated nature of people, problems and issues was visible.

The goals, needs and dilemmas facing the Aborigines Welfare Board were in almost every way quite different to those facing the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The simplest clear example was in house rental and rent collection policy. The Aborigines Welfare Board had major widespread housing crises and extensive humpy and riverbank camps; a decade later these were no longer possible escape routes for Aborigines, most of whom had for many years been away from them and a generation was growing up for whom
they were a thing of the past.

The Aborigines Welfare Board tended to act paternalistically accepting responsibility for the Aboriginal community and acting as a buffer between it and the reality of the general community. This was associated with a great deal of unpredictability and inconsistency. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs on the other hand expected Aborigines to accept responsibility and thus they were able to act more consistently and predictably and apply sanctions. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs made explicit an expectation of equality whereas the Aborigines Welfare Board tended to give a covert message of belief about Aborigines being unequal to the task.

It is clearly possible to go on and on with what seems to be an invidious comparison of the two programmes. However, together they provide some opportunity for insight into the nature of the broad spectrum social change programmes which far outweigh the value of separately considering their differences.

Implementing planned programmes of major change in complex social structures is a sequential and continuous long-term, rather than a short-term, process. It seems evident that to begin with it is possible to develop programmes that offer services and individual contact which allow the build up of pictures of larger systems. Eventually enough perspective exists to develop more wide-ranging and complex programmes.

Certain types of organisational structure appear more efficient than others and specifically those that offer direct control from full-time professionals seem to be more effective and congruent than ones which split administration, policy decision making and implementation apart, into separate functioning units.

Along with this last observation, when change is affecting a substantial group in the population, the total life cycle and the full range of life tasks needs to be considered if activity in one area is not to be undercut by activity in another.

The more aware the 'client' groups become of their disadvantage the more opportunity they need for involvement in processes affecting them and thus the more significant is the notion of legitimising action by contracting with them as clients.

The concept of congruence needs to apply to policy and to short and long term programmes if their effect is to be cumulative and lasting.

There also appears to be a need to establish structures that are somehow able to be totally rebuilt every so often as they cease to be relevant to the problem they were established to resolve. As a major change programme progresses, the needs, values and dilemmas shift and the organisations established to manage the change must shift also. Perhaps it is possible to build flexibility into the structure through the legitimisation of intervention by the potential client system, usually the initial objects of the change process.
The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was able to benefit extensively from the Aborigines Welfare Board but neither benefited greatly from the preceding century of activity. We do not yet seem to have built into our social intervention apparatus an awareness that we need to evaluate every programme so that the necessity for repeated errors is reduced. There is a need to acknowledge that it is legitimate to apply to the problems of people the processes of scientific enquiry. However, it is not reasonable to expect that initial efforts with these processes will prove successful nor that ultimately such processes will turn out to be the most apt. There is a great deal yet to be learned about consciously planning social change.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Act/Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>6 and 7 Victoria, c.22</td>
<td>Aborigines (Acts and Ordinances in force in the Colony of Victoria). Legislature of British Colonies (New South Wales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, Victoria</td>
<td>An Act establishing the &quot;Central Board to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>11/6/1957 No. 6088</td>
<td>&quot;An Act relating to the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria; and for other purposes&quot;. Victorian Parliament. Repeals Aborigines Act 1928 and Paragraph (a) S. 177 of the Licensing Act 1928 and Paragraph (a) Sub-section (1) or Section 69 of the Police Offences Act 1957.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>No. 6498</td>
<td>Aborigines (Houses) Act 1959.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
No. 7574  

No. 7721  
Amendment to 1967 Act.

15. 1969 28/10/1969  
No. 7861  
Amendment to the 1967 Act.

No. 7949  
Amendment to the 1967 Act.

17. 1970 8/12/1970  
No. 8044  
Aboriginal Lands Act 1970. "An Act to provide for the Lands reserved for the use of the Aborigines at Framlingham and Lake Tyers to be vested in a Framlingham Aboriginal Trust and a Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust respectively, to regulate the Affairs of the said Trusts; to amend the Aboriginal Affairs Act 1967 and the Land Tax Act 1958, and for other purposes".

No. 8177  
Amendment to the Aboriginal Lands Act 1970.

No. 8181  
Amendment to the 1967 Act.
## APPENDIX B

### SELECT COMMITTEES, OFFICIAL ENQUIRIES, ROYAL COMMISSIONS OF ABORIGINES IN VICTORIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Select Committee on Aborigines of the British House of Commons</td>
<td>British House of Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Select Committee on Aborigines of the New South Wales Legislative Council</td>
<td>New South Wales Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Official enquiry into the conditions of the Aborigines and the Protectorate</td>
<td>New South Wales Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Official enquiry into the conditions of the Aborigines and the Protectorate</td>
<td>New South Wales Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Select Committee on Aborigines</td>
<td>New South Wales Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Select Committee on Aborigines</td>
<td>New South Wales Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Select Committee of the Victorian Legislative Council appointed “to enquire into the present conditions of the Aborigines in this Colony and the best means of alleviating their absolute wants”. (Report 1859/1860)</td>
<td>Victorian Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Royal Commission on the Aborigines</td>
<td>Victorian Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Board to enquire into and report on the present condition and management of Corranderrk Aboriginal station</td>
<td>Victorian Parliament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESERVES, SETTLEMENTS, MISSIONS, STATIONS, ESTABLISHED FOR ABORIGINES IN VICTORIA; AREAS OF LAND ALLOCATED

Note: Where exact figures are given by the secondary or primary sources these have been used if they could be checked or confirmed; in several instances documents refer to so many square miles, such figures have been converted to acres and rounded to the nearest meaningful whole number. The purpose of this exercise is not to show exactly the number of acres at one time given to Aboriginal use, but to show the approximate dates and sizes of the transfer of land to show the nature of land grant dispersion over time by government. Also, the figures have been totalled and the total is really a semi-statistic and allow us to say that since European acquisition a total in the order of about 200,000 acres has at one time or another been offered back to Aboriginal use and that at the final transaction between the Government and the Aborigines in 1971 the transfer of land handed to the Trusts was 4,582 acres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reserve and Area (where known named)</th>
<th>Area (acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Mt. Franklyn</td>
<td>41,073 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Mt. Rouse</td>
<td>No records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Goulburn Station</td>
<td>32,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Buntingdale</td>
<td>64,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Mordialloc</td>
<td>832 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Warrandyte</td>
<td>1,908 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Lake Boga</td>
<td>17,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Yarra Mission</td>
<td>5,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Corranderrk</td>
<td>4,850 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861+</td>
<td>Framlingham</td>
<td>4,727 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867-9</td>
<td>Lake Condah</td>
<td>3,743 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>2nd Moravian Mission</td>
<td>1,879 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>2nd Moravian Mission</td>
<td>1,700 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Dimboola Reserve</td>
<td>30 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Lake Tyers</td>
<td>4,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186-</td>
<td>Yelta</td>
<td>No record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Mooroopna</td>
<td>150 acres</td>
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Other Reserves (following Barwick 1963) op.cit.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reserve</th>
<th>Area (acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gayfield</td>
<td>2,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elleminyt</td>
<td>40 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dergholm</td>
<td>180 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duneed</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangorton</td>
<td>181 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamgun</td>
<td>3 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steiglitz</td>
<td>63 acres</td>
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</table>
Other Reserves (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tallageira</td>
<td>620 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangamballanga</td>
<td>640 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahgunyah</td>
<td>21 acres</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other Stations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ebenezer</td>
<td>3,607 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramahyuck</td>
<td>2,356 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2
ECOOMIC DATA FOR ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD 1956/59, ITS FIRST FULL YEAR OF OPERATION, AND FOR 1966/7, ITS LAST YEAR OF OPERATION

1958/59
ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD EXPENDITURE
(Converted to Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries &amp; Wages</td>
<td>$21,220.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>3,890.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores &amp; Medical Supplies</td>
<td>20,872.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building maintenance &amp; Repairs</td>
<td>8,610.00 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming &amp; Livestock</td>
<td>5,850.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office rent &amp; furniture</td>
<td>2,654.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td>4,078.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$67,174.00</td>
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</table>

1966/67
ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD EXPENDITURE & INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance unexpended 1965/66</td>
<td>$102,978.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(This was characteristic of each year, a large unexpended sum:)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>33,176.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Funds</td>
<td>140,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote Funds</td>
<td>131,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Unexpended 1966/67</td>
<td>55,923.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total EXPENDITURE 1966/67</td>
<td>$351,231.51</td>
</tr>
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</table>

EXPENDITURE & INCOME (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Maintenance &amp; Housing</td>
<td>$173,451.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) To H.C.V. for Rumbalara</td>
<td>17,878.00</td>
<td>191,329.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) To H.C.V. for rent</td>
<td>(Approx. 572)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) To Lake Tyers</td>
<td>12,008.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Salaries</td>
<td>65,197.11</td>
<td>268,534.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Relief &amp; Assistance - after</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.C.V. payment for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumbalara taken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out = $48,328.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Item (2)</td>
<td>17,878.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,450.04</td>
<td>318,984.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Travel</td>
<td>11,819.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Office requisites, printing,</td>
<td>3,205.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stationery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Books, Publications, Board</td>
<td>3,031.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fees and incidentals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Postage &amp; Telephone</td>
<td>4,605.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Motor vehicles, purchase</td>
<td>8,946.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and running expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Fuel, light, power, water</td>
<td>558.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total $351,231.51
### TABLE 4 (a)

**NUMBER AND COST OF HOUSES PURCHASED AND MAINTAINED - 1962-1972**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABORIGINAL WELFARE BOARD</th>
<th>ABW &amp; MAA</th>
<th>MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Houses purchased for Aborigines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cost</td>
<td>$35,500</td>
<td>$185,500</td>
<td>$222,000</td>
<td>$27,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost per house</td>
<td>$5,900</td>
<td>$7,700</td>
<td>$5,850</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance costs</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3,447</td>
<td>13,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. properties maintained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note**

1. Data for this table was compiled from subject files and budget/accounting records, property and maintenance files.
2. All figures rounded to the nearest $500.

**Note**

At the point when data ceased to be collected late 1972, 6 houses had been purchased from 1972/73 funds and it was possible to account for a total expenditure on house acquisitions 1958/1972 of $1,137,500 and an average expenditure per house capital and maintenance of $9,300, of which $7,900 was acquisition and $1,400 maintenance.
### TABLE 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>150 cottages to meet the immediate housing need over the next few years</td>
<td>Figures do not include Settlement Houses built by the H.C.V.</td>
<td>Statements on number of families housed by A.W.B., including comments on number of individuals (in some instances, figures generally cumulative; also statements on unsatisfactorily housed Aboriginal families and individuals).</td>
<td>Some statements from Housing Section of Annual Reports related to finance for housing. (Figures all converted to dollars).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Estimate 60 houses for 3 years to meet major housing problem</td>
<td>30 families are housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>197 families need adequate housing estimate 250 houses needed (about $700,000)</td>
<td>53 families living in H.C.V. houses (38 un-sponsored; 15 sponsored by A.W.B.)</td>
<td>144 families 771 individuals in various sub-standard dwellings (52% of houses inadequate); 75 families 365 individuals in appalling and unsatisfactory conditions or shacks.</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>144 families 771 individuals in various sub-standard dwellings (52% of houses inadequate); 75 families 365 individuals in appalling and unsatisfactory conditions or shacks.</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>205 families needing housing</td>
<td>144 families 771 individuals in various sub-standard dwellings (52% of houses inadequate); 75 families 365 individuals in appalling and unsatisfactory conditions or shacks.</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>244 families needing housing</td>
<td>144 families 771 individuals in various sub-standard dwellings (52% of houses inadequate); 75 families 365 individuals in appalling and unsatisfactory conditions or shacks.</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>- No figures stated</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
<td>- Kil data - 160 families are satisfactorily housed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A comparison of this Table column C, D or F with Table C, D or F indicates the difficult nature of collecting reliable data. Any relationship between the figures is strictly coincidental; however, the totals are close enough to suggest the dimension of the activity.**

On this statement the Board provided 116 houses per annum during its lifetime.
### TABLE 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. No. of families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No. of individuals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation type family moved to during the year and whether they remained in the new accommodation during the year</td>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.W.B. house</td>
<td>Move</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.C.V. house</td>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.C.V. house</td>
<td>Move</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. (Standard private accommodation or with relatives)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sub-standard accommodation or camp)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Present Family Accommodation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.W.B.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.C.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. October 1966</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sub-std or camp</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Tyers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. (9) families who left Lake Tyers for H.C.V. or other accommodation obtained an A.W.B. house.

C. (12) families who left Lake Tyers for A.W.B. houses obtained them, although 5 left them during the period and several left and returned.

21 A.W.B. units were supplied to Lake Tyers families.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Population</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>2260</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E.A. Census 6245</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commonwealth Census 4371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>33,177</td>
<td>15,716</td>
<td>15,716</td>
<td>16,717</td>
<td>17,717</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote Funds</td>
<td>131,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Allocation</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>225,500</td>
<td>347,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>367,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Year       | Expend. | Expend. | Expend. | £/Yrs*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967/68</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>320,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968/69</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970/71</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971/72</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Staff</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers</td>
<td>Establishment</td>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Field Staff</td>
<td>Establishment</td>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units Available</th>
<th>C/4/2/4 per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Grants</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total W.H. Houses to be sponsored</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of all Housing</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Pre-school</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Primary School</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Indusy School</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

1. 12 Aborigines who were employed as farm hands, etc. on Lake Tyers have been excluded from count.
2. The calculation that resulted in the Annual Report figure of 186 was not correct and later checking resulted in a corrected figure of 168 (it is possible the error was typographical).
3. These figures indicate 165 houses for Aborigines, 10 vacant at Rumbalara are included. There is no recorded method of accounting accurately for the rest.
4. This figure includes 10 vacant at Rumbalara.
5. The 195 figure includes 25 houses on Lake Tyers and Freamingham settlements and both figures include 10 vacant dwellings at Rumbalara.
6. The Annual Report shows 20 additional Housing Grants, my 1970/71 figure is correctly established from the Housing Grant file study as it is reasonable to add 20 to 27, giving 47.
7. The B.C.V. figures are meaningless after 1970 because the B.C.V. 's own statement that it believed it was housing about 30 additional Aboriginal families per year was accepted. This estimation was made in 1972. However, at the prospect of a handover of housing responsibilities from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; their more detailed file examination may have led to a more precise figure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
<th>H.C.V.</th>
<th>M.A.A.</th>
<th>OWN</th>
<th>PRIVATE PURCHASE</th>
<th>Prov by Emp.</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RENT</td>
<td>PURCHASE</td>
<td>RENT</td>
<td>PURCHASE</td>
<td>RENT</td>
<td>INDEP. FINANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YALLEE</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOULBURN</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIPPSLAND E.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27 (2)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. GIPPSLAND</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METROPOLITAN</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>148 (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOCATION OF ABORIGINAL HOUSING DATA (DATA COMPILED BY FIELD STAFF AT JUNE 1972)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Amount $</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Amount $</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26,600</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7,600</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>85,128</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56,136</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Ceased operation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Ceased operation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** I was not able to obtain the data in these categories at the time of preparation as both schemes were phasing down.

- Include very substantial grants from Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs 1970/71/72
- Important Note: In all cases figures have been extracted either from Annual Reports or from communications with organisations' officials and records. There are inevitably numerous omissions and apparent discrepancies. No figures quoted for which source did not have authority to make statements, but changing and reconciling simply impractical.
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