

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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House of Representatives Standing Committee
on
Aboriginal Affairs

Report on
Aboriginal Unemployment
Special Work Projects

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs was originally appointed during the Twenty-eighth Parliament by resolution of the House of Representatives on 29 May 1973¹.

The Committee was re-appointed in the Twenty-ninth Parliament by resolution of the House of Representatives on 18 July 1974².

The terms of reference were identical in the Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth Parliaments, viz. :

The Committee is to inquire into and report on matters referred to it by resolution of the House, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, or by motion of the Committee within the following terms :

- (a) to consult with Aboriginal and Island people on policies and programs for their advancement;
- (b) to examine the present situation of Aboriginal and Island people, recommend policies and improvements; and
- (c) evaluate the effect of policies and programs on Aboriginal and Island people.

¹Votes and Proceedings No.32, 29 May 1973.

²Votes and Proceedings No.6, 18 July 1974.

Members of the Committee - Twenty-ninth Parliament

Chairman .. Mr M.D. Cross M.P.
Members .. Mr G. Clayton M.P.
Mr F.W. Collard M.P.
Mr J.S. Dawkins M.P.
Mr P.S. Fisher M.P.*
Mr A.W. Jarman M.P.
Mr P.M. Ruddock M.P.
Mr R.W. Thorburn M.P.
The Hon. W.C. Wentworth M.P.

Clerk to the Committee - Mr C.S. Boorman

Technical Adviser - Emeritus Professor W.E.H. Stanner
C.M.G.

* Mr P.S. Fisher M.P. was appointed in place of the
Hon. R.J.D. Hunt M.P. who resigned in May 1975.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that :

- 1 the Special Work Projects Scheme be greatly expanded and that the Australian Government make the necessary funds available.
(paragraph 82)

- 2 negotiations between the Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Labor and Immigration commence immediately on the transfer of responsibility for the Special Work Projects Scheme to the Department of Labor and Immigration.
(paragraph 88)

- 3 (a) the Department of Labor and Immigration be authorised to immediately fill all vacant positions in the Aboriginal employment sections; and

(b) there be an immediate review of the establishment of the Aboriginal employment sections of the Department of Labor and Immigration which will carry out duties associated with the recommended expansion of the Special Work Projects Scheme.
(paragraph 91)



- 4 (a) the Office of the Public Service Board and Australian Government departments actively recruit Aboriginals for employment and training and create, as necessary, special training positions; and
- (b) Australian Government instrumentalities actively recruit Aboriginals for employment and training and create, as necessary, special training positions funded by the Australian Government.

(paragraph 102)

1 INTRODUCTION

Activities of the Committee

1 The Committee began its Inquiry into Aboriginal Unemployment in Canberra on 28 February 1975.

2 Following public hearings on 28 February and 7 March 1975 the Committee decided to examine in detail one scheme designed to alleviate Aboriginal unemployment and on 13 May 1975 resolved :

That the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs inquire into and report on the operation of Special Work Projects with particular reference to New South Wales having regard to :

- (a) the effectiveness of Special Work Projects in alleviating Aboriginal unemployment; and
- (b) training opportunities for permanent employment for Aboriginals.

3 New South Wales was selected for particular attention by the Committee in view of the wide range of Special Work Projects being undertaken in that State. On the recommendation of the Department of Labor and Immigration the Committee decided to examine Special Work Projects at Moree, Boggabilla and Narrabri.

4 Interested persons and organisations were invited to participate in the Inquiry. Public hearings were conducted in Canberra, Sydney, Moree, Boggabilla and Narrabri.

Evidence was heard from Australian Government departments, New South Wales Government organisations, local government authorities, Aboriginal organisations, other bodies and interested persons. Inspections were conducted in Moree, Toomelah Mission (near Boggabilla) and Narrabri.

Witnesses

5 Evidence was heard from 51 witnesses of whom 11 were Aboriginals. A list of witnesses who appeared before the Committee is given in Appendix 1. Evidence given at the public hearings is available for inspection at the Committee Office of the House of Representatives and at the National Library of Australia.

Acknowledgments

6 The Committee wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of the Premier of New South Wales in the Inquiry. It also wishes to thank the Australian Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Labor and Immigration, New South Wales Government organisations, local government authorities, Aboriginal organisations and all the other bodies and interested persons who gave evidence.

2 THE SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS SCHEME

7 Special Work Projects is the name given to a scheme designed to provide employment and on-the-job training for Aborigines.

History and Objectives

8 The Special Work Projects Scheme commenced in 1969 and in its first year of operation (1969-70) \$35,000 was allocated to the Scheme. The Scheme was conceived as a temporary unemployment relief measure for Aborigines. As shown in paragraph 10 it now has a much wider role.

9 An objective of the Australian Government, shared by Aborigines, is that employment opportunities and working conditions equal to those of the rest of the community should be made available to Aborigines. Employment is recognised as a crucial element in the social, economic and political development of Aborigines within the wider Australian community.

10 The Australian Government, through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, funds the Special Work Projects Scheme with a view to :

- (a) alleviating unemployment in areas of high Aboriginal unemployment where employment opportunities are lacking; and
- (b) providing on-the-job training opportunities for permanent employment.

Terms and Conditions

11 The terms and conditions of the Special Work Projects Scheme are attached at Appendix 2. Under the Scheme finance is made available by way of direct grant to projects carried out by local government authorities, State Government organisations, Aboriginal and other organisations, and with certain limitations, to private employers.

12 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs informed the Committee that the Scheme's terms and conditions permit a flexible and imaginative approach. The terms and conditions are under review by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in conjunction with the Department of Labor and Immigration.

Funding

13 The following Table shows the level of funds spent to 1974-75 and appropriated in 1975-76 :

	<u>N.S.W.</u>	<u>Australia</u>
1970-71	\$ 18,000	\$ 53,000
1971-72	\$ 147,000	\$ 352,000
1972-73	\$1,100,000	\$3,430,000
1973-74	\$1,566,000	\$5,400,000
1974-75	\$1,900,000	\$6,373,000
1975-76(est.)	\$1,259,000	\$4,645,000

Administration

14 The Scheme is administered by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in conjunction with the Department of Labor and Immigration. The Department of Labor and Immigration

makes recommendations to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs on projects developed by it. Funds are provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

15 Evidence was received which made it apparent that there was insufficient consultation and co-operation at all levels between the two departments.

Staffing

16 The Committee believes that the administration of the Scheme lacks sufficient staff at field officer level. This could be a contributing factor to insufficient consultation referred to in paragraph 15.

17 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs assumed responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in New South Wales on 22 August 1975. Of the New South Wales staff of 55 there are only 8 in the field.

18 The Department of Labor and Immigration has an establishment of 132 positions in the Aboriginal employment field throughout Australia and at the time of the recent imposition of Public Service staff ceilings only 81 were filled. The establishment in New South Wales is 33 positions of which 22 are filled and 6 in the process of being filled. The Department employs field officers whose responsibilities include the development of Special Work Projects; their establishment is 50 and 27 respectively of which 13 and 8 respectively are allocated to New South Wales.

19 The Committee received evidence that the present establishment of the Department of Labor and Immigration was insufficient given the responsibilities of the positions.

Participating Organisations

20 The terms and conditions of the Scheme specify the organisations which are eligible for funds (paragraph 11). The Committee noted that there is no specific reference in the terms and conditions of the role of Australian Government departments in the provision of employment and training for Aboriginals but, nevertheless, makes recommendations on this aspect in Chapter 9. Evidence was received on some projects undertaken by some participating organisations and this is summarised in Appendix 3. The role of the participating organisations is discussed below.

Local Government Authorities

21 Local government authorities are the major recipients of Special Work Projects funds. The following Table shows the amounts allocated to the authorities in recent years together with their share of total funds :

	<u>N.S.W.</u>	<u>Australia</u>
1973-74	\$1,223,000(78%)	\$3,039,000(57%)
1974-75	\$1,608,000(84%)	\$4,562,000(66%)
1975-76(est.)	\$ 972,000(78%)	\$4,427,000(95%)

Source : 1975-76 Budget Paper No.7 "Payments to or for the States and local government authorities 1975-76", page 119.

22 The Committee received evidence (Appendix 3) from 4 local government authorities about their participation in Special Work Projects. Of these, 3 are at present in receipt of Special Work Projects funds. The Moree Municipal Council is not involved in the Scheme at the present time. It has,

however, participated in the past and is at present considering a further proposal.

State Government Organisations

23 State Government organisations are the other major recipients of Special Work Projects funds. Seven New South Wales State organisations are participating in the Scheme and their allocation in 1975-76 was \$287,000. The Committee noted that these organisations have an establishment of 65 positions allocated to Aborigines under Special Work Projects.

Aboriginal Organisations

24 One of the aims of the Scheme is the involvement and participation of Aboriginal organisations. In this regard the Committee noted that Aboriginal organisations in the towns of Moree, Boggabilla and Narrabri have not participated in the Special Work Projects Scheme. This is largely due to their lack of awareness of the existence of the Scheme. This in turn is due to a lack of field staff of Australian Government departments to effectively liaise with them.

25 The Committee also noted that Aboriginal communities are often not consulted by organisations in the development stage of projects. This again is largely due to a lack of field staff.

Other Organisations

26 The Committee received evidence on a project developed by the Moree District Hospital and notes the success of this project.

Private Employers

27 Private employers who are establishing new enterprises in areas of high Aboriginal unemployment are eligible for Special Work Projects grants (Paragraph 10 of Appendix 2). The Committee was informed that one private employer has been granted assistance under the Scheme.

3 THE NEED FOR THE SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS SCHEME

28 The Committee recognises that special initiatives are needed to create and promote employment and training opportunities for Aborigines. Special Work Projects are one such initiative. Other schemes which have implications for Aboriginal employment and training are discussed in Chapter 5.

29 The Committee also recognises that employment is but one of a number of interconnected factors such as health, education and housing which contribute to Aboriginal advancement. To illustrate this the Committee notes that the achievement of the Australian Government's goal to properly house all Aboriginal families by 1982 and for those families to maintain the standard required of them will, to a large extent, depend on regular employment.

30 The need for special initiatives in the field of Aboriginal employment stems from the high level of Aboriginal unemployment, lack of general education, formal and on-the-job training, work experience, and discrimination against them. These aspects are discussed below.

High Level of Aboriginal Unemployment

31 The following Table compares the level and percentage of Aboriginal and total registrants for employment in Australia and New South Wales as at the end of September 1975 :

<u>Registrants</u>	<u>Australia</u>		<u>N.S.W.</u>	
	Number	%	Number	%
Aboriginal	7896	25	2311	35
Total	246094	4.1	97509	4.3

32 The above Table shows that in a period of comparatively high general unemployment Aboriginal unemployment is 6 to 7 times greater than total unemployment. In addition when unemployment generally was at a low level namely 1.4% as at the end of June 1973, Aboriginal unemployment was 12% or 8 to 9 times greater.

33 Evidence suggests that the number of Aboriginals registered for employment does not reflect the true level of their unemployment. Many Aboriginals do not register with the Commonwealth Employment Service due, in part, to their remoteness from normal employment opportunities, their level of access to the Service and their different approach to employment. The Table in paragraph 31, therefore, understates the actual unemployment position of Aboriginals.

Disadvantages faced by Aboriginals in Employment

34 As noted in paragraph 30 the effects of such disadvantage is reflected in a number of ways which are discussed in paragraphs 35 to 37.

35 Employed male Aboriginals are mainly employed in unskilled farming and labouring work. Some 66% of them are so employed compared with 15% of the overall workforce. Few Aboriginals are employed in professional, skilled and semi-skilled occupations and in self-employment.

36 Aboriginals are less attractive as potential employees than non-Aboriginals. This attitude of some employers stems in the main from poor employment records which reflect a lack of application and different attitudes to employment. The views of some employers also reflect long standing community bias against the employment of Aboriginals.

37 The Committee received evidence that discrimination is a further disadvantage in the employment of Aboriginals. Some employers say to Aboriginals who respond to advertised vacancies that the position has been filled or that the vacancy no longer exists.

4 EVALUATION OF THE SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS SCHEME

38 The effectiveness of the Special Work Projects Scheme in alleviating Aboriginal unemployment and the provision of training opportunities for permanent employment is the subject of this Report. The Committee recognised that any assessment of the Special Work Projects Scheme is a complex and difficult task. To measure effectiveness simply in terms of statistical indicators ignores often intangible social benefits.

Alleviation of Aboriginal Unemployment

39 At the end of June 1975 there were only 183 Aboriginals employed under the Special Work Projects Scheme in New South Wales and only 750 in Australia, these figures being less than 3% of the respective estimated Aboriginal workforces. The number of Aboriginals who would have been employed at some time during 1974-75 would have been greater than the number employed at the end of the year due to the termination of some projects before the end of the year and turnover of Aboriginal employees.

40 The Committee notes with concern the small number of Aboriginals employed under the Special Work Projects Scheme. As an employment relief scheme it does not yet appear to have influenced to any great extent the level of Aboriginal employment.

Training for permanent employment

41 The training offered to Aboriginals under the Special Work Projects Scheme varies from project to project. The jobs created under the Scheme on which the Committee received

evidence (Appendix 3) number 100. Of these, 13 clerical assistant and 4 technical assistant jobs could provide significant training. The remaining 83 are at best of a semi-skilled or labouring nature in the building and construction industry, forestry, national parks and abattoirs.

42 As can be seen from the breakdown of jobs under the Scheme (paragraph 41) the amount of training offered appears to be marginal. The Committee, however, appreciates that whilst such training may not appear significant, it could be significant to persons without skills and with little work experience.

43 The Committee received evidence that of the Aboriginals employed under the Special Work Projects Scheme in New South Wales in 1974-75 about 20 were placed in permanent employment at the end of their training period. There is no record of the number of Aboriginals who would have terminated their employment under the Special Work Projects Scheme in New South Wales in 1974-75.

44 Most employers indicated that they will give sympathetic consideration, should there be a vacancy, to the permanent employment of those Aboriginals currently employed under the Scheme at the termination of the training period. Many State and local government authorities do not have funds to employ additional staff.

Social Benefits

45 Special Work Projects have benefited Aboriginals in ways distinct from employment and training. Besides providing Aboriginals with work skills and work experience the Scheme

has enhanced their prospects of employment in the general workforce. The morale of Aboriginals and their families has been raised together with their work motivation.

46 The Scheme has promoted a change in attitude between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. It has been instrumental in improving community relations and in changing and improving the attitude of fellow-workers and employers. Liaison between Aboriginals and local government authorities has improved and has extended into other areas. Such improved community attitudes have reduced certain barriers such as entry to hotels, clubs, swimming pools and other public places. The Special Work Projects Scheme has played a role in helping the community to bring about such change.

47 The terms and conditions give preference to projects seen to have special value to Aboriginals such as the improvement of community facilities. The sub-committee which visited Toomelah Mission near Boggabilla noted a striking example of the benefit to a community by the provision of a community hall and extensions to houses. This was the only instance noted by the Committee which was of particular value to an Aboriginal community.

Conclusion

48 In earlier paragraphs the Committee discussed the value of the Special Work Projects Scheme in alleviating unemployment (paragraphs 39 and 40), in the provision of training (paragraphs 41 and 42), permanent employment (paragraph 43) and social benefits (paragraphs 45-47). In summary the Committee notes with dismay that the Scheme has

neither been significantly effective in alleviating Aboriginal unemployment nor in providing training and permanent employment for Aboriginals. The Committee, however, sees merit in the social benefits arising from the Scheme. In arriving at this conclusion the Committee recognises that the level of funds provided to date has limited the operation of the Scheme. Notwithstanding, the Committee believes that the Scheme would have potential in providing employment and on-the-job training if it were expanded, funds appropriately increased, and if employment were provided on a regular and lasting basis. Further consideration of the future role of the Special Work Projects Scheme is given in Chapter 7.

5 OTHER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SCHEMES

49 A number of other employment and training schemes available to Aborigines are discussed below.

Regional Employment Development Scheme

50 The Regional Employment Development Scheme (REDS) was introduced by the Australian Government in September 1974. It is designed to improve employment opportunities in areas of excessively high unemployment. The Australian Government, through the Department of Labor and Immigration, funds labour intensive programs of a socially useful or economically viable nature.

51 The Department of Labor and Immigration administers the Scheme in conjunction with employing authorities who are mainly State and local government authorities. It provides the operational machinery and information on unemployment.

52 The peak month for employment under the Scheme was July 1975 with a total of 32,000 persons of whom over 11,800 were in New South Wales. These figures represent about 0.5% of the respective labour forces.

53 The number of Aborigines employed under the Scheme is about 1,800 in Australia and 635 in New South Wales as at the end of June 1975. These figures represent about 5.5% and 10% of the respective Aboriginal labour forces. They are, however, conservative as some Aborigines have not been recorded as such.

54 The RED Scheme is designed to provide employment for persons deemed to be in the greatest need. As shown in paragraphs 52 and 53 Aboriginals have been recruited pro rata to a greater extent than non-Aboriginals, namely 5.5% of the Aboriginal labour force as against 0.5% of the labour force generally.

55 The Australian Government announced in August 1975 that the RED Scheme will be terminated. Evidence to the Committee is that employment under the Scheme will probably be terminated by the end of 1975.

National Employment and Training System

56 The National Employment and Training System (NEATS) was introduced by the Australian Government on 1 October 1974 and is administered by the Department of Labor and Immigration. On its introduction the previous Employment Training Scheme for Aboriginals was absorbed.

57 The Scheme provides for subsidies to employers to encourage them to employ Aboriginals; compensation for providing on-the-job employment training for a period of less than 12 months; and payment of fares to take up employment. For junior Aboriginals the Scheme provides for living-away-from-home allowances; payment of return fares to visit their families; payment of the first week's accommodation; assistance with daily fares in major employment centres and clothing grants.

58 A special program within NEATS provides for the needs of Aboriginals. There are extra provisions under NEATS to ensure that Aboriginals are not disadvantaged vis-a-vis other participants.

59 The number of Aboriginals in training under NEATS at the end of June 1975 was about 1,470 out of a total of 14,700. Aboriginals have benefited under NEATS on a pro rata basis to a greater extent than non-Aboriginals. This is illustrated by a comparison of the proportion of Aboriginals being trained under NEATS, namely 10%, with the proportion of Aboriginals in the Australian population, namely 1%.

60 Fifty-two million dollars were allocated to NEATS in 1975-76 compared to an expenditure of \$30m in 1974-75. As NEATS did not commence until October 1974 and most new training would not have commenced until February 1975 the average monthly allocation of funds in 1975-76 is less than in 1974-75. Evidence to the Committee is that the average number in training will fall from 14,700 to 12,300. If no priority is given to Aboriginals the number in training could fall by over 200.

Aboriginal Organisations

61 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs makes direct grants to Aboriginal people and organisations and thereby has had some impact on employment opportunities. Aboriginals are employed by organisations such as Aboriginal Hostels Pty Ltd, Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd, the various legal aid offices, housing associations and medical centres. In addition employment of all types is to be found in voluntary and independent Aboriginal organisations such as the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs and the Adelaide Cultural Centre.

62 Since October 1968 total applications processed under both the former Capital Fund and the present Aboriginal Loans Commission number 6,093 with a value of over \$152m. Loans

approved to June 1975 total over \$8.8m to 568 economic or potentially economic enterprises comprising over \$1.8m to 22 communities and over \$6.9m to 546 individuals. Funds for the loans approved comprise \$7m received from the Australian Government and the balance from loans repaid. Such financial assistance has enabled Aborigines to gain employment through ownership of their own enterprises. The total job opportunities created to date, including part-time entrepreneurs and community ventures approximate 1,035. Numbers vary from time to time according to the economic climate and seasonal factors.

63 Australian Government assistance for the purchase of properties off Reserves has provided employment opportunities to Aborigines. Between 1972 and the enactment of the Aboriginal Land Fund Act 1974 thirteen properties were acquired for Aborigines at a cost of just over \$3m. A Commission has been established under the Act with a charter to consider claims for land off Reserves for Aborigines throughout Australia. A Land Fund was established and received \$1.9m from the Aboriginal Trust Account and \$2m from the Australian Government for 1975-76. Since the Commission was established 10 properties have been acquired or are in the process of being acquired.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
OF 1975-76 BUDGET

64 The decreased allocation of funds for the Special Work Projects Scheme and the wind down of the RED Scheme will have serious implications for Aborigines. These are discussed below.

Employment

65 The increase in the number of Aborigines likely to be unemployed as a result of the decreased allocation of Special Work Projects funds (paragraph 13) and the wind down of the RED Scheme (paragraph 53) is about 2,000 in Australia and 750 in New South Wales. These figures represent about 6% and 11% of the respective labour forces.

66 The wind down of the RED Scheme will affect 32,000 persons which is about 0.5% of the Australian labour force. It can thus be seen that Aborigines are likely to be disadvantaged to the extent of some 15 times that of Australians generally.

67 The Committee notes with concern that Aboriginal unemployment has already begun to increase. Aborigines registered for employment in Australia increased from 7,062 at the end of June to 7,896 at the end of September and in New South Wales from 1,801 to 2,311.

68 The reduced allocation of Special Work Projects funds and the wind down of the RED Scheme could increase the proportion of Aborigines unemployed from 25% to 35%. The

Committee reiterates that the actual position could be more serious than these figures indicate because many Aboriginals do not register for employment.

Training

69 Aboriginals will have reduced opportunities for training because of decreased allocation of funds for Special Work Projects in 1975-76. Similarly the training opportunities that the RED Scheme provided will soon be closed. Steps to overcome the decline in training previously offered under these two Schemes are discussed in Chapter 7.

7 THE FUTURE OF SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS
SCHEME

Case for an expanded Special Work Projects Scheme

70 The Committee is gravely concerned at the depressing situation of Aboriginal unemployment highlighted in this Report. Its concern stems from the fact that Aboriginal unemployment is 6 or 7 times greater than overall unemployment in times of high unemployment (paragraph 32) and that the proportion of the Aboriginal workforce unemployed could increase from 25% to 35% (paragraph 68). In addition, the Committee was informed that Aboriginal employment will be in a much more critical position during 1975-76 than at any time since the Australian Government entered the field of Aboriginal affairs.

71 This depressing situation has developed despite efforts by Australian Governments in recent years. The Committee, therefore, believes that the Australian Government will need to discriminate even more positively in favour of Aboriginals if the objective of equal opportunity in employment for Aboriginals is to be achieved.

72 Having regard to the number of Aboriginals currently registered for employment (paragraph 31) and the likely increase in the number of Aboriginals unemployed as discussed in paragraph 65, there will be a need to place in employment some 9,000 Aboriginals in Australia and 2,500 in New South Wales if the percentage of Aboriginal unemployment is to be reduced to the same level for Australians generally.

73 The Committee believes that irrespective of the economic conditions prevailing, most country areas throughout

Australia will continue to have high levels of unemployment and as a consequence there will always be a need for an unemployment relief scheme in these areas. The Committee, therefore, believes that employment schemes should not be switched 'on' and 'off' and should be of a regular and lasting basis.

74 In support of the views expressed in paragraph 73 the Committee notes that the Australian Government introduced the RED Scheme at a time when unemployment generally was below 5%. There is thus an even stronger case for special measures to alleviate Aboriginal unemployment which is approaching 35%.

Components of an expanded Special Work Projects Scheme

75 In the Committee's view, Aboriginal unemployment could be significantly reduced by an expanded Special Work Projects Scheme. The Committee envisages a two-tier Scheme comprising a maximisation of the training component and a greatly expanded unemployment relief component. Both these components are already provided for in the terms and conditions (Appendix 2).

76 In respect to the two-tier Scheme the Committee recognises that there are many Aboriginals whose employment potential may be limited to the unemployment relief component whilst others could benefit from training.

Scope for expansion

77 The Committee believes that there is considerable scope for an increased level of participation by the organisations referred to in paragraphs 21-27. It observed a lack of involvement by Aboriginal organisations, shortage

of funds in State Government organisations and local government authorities, and lack of participation by some local government authorities and eligible private employers.

78 The Committee believes that greater assistance should be given to Aboriginal communities and organisations for the establishment of Aboriginal-run enterprises. Such enterprises could provide long-term employment and greater scope for Aboriginal communities to work at their own pace and in their own style.

79 The Committee received evidence that few, if any, Aboriginals are employed in commercial businesses such as banks and shops in towns of large Aboriginal population. It believes that this is an avenue that could be examined.

Financial Considerations

80 In the Committee's view, the cost of an expanded Special Work Projects Scheme could be largely offset by reduced expenditure on unemployment benefits. This is because some 89% of Aboriginals who were registered for employment as at the end of June 1975, were in receipt of unemployment benefit. Another factor which is often raised is that Aboriginals tend to have large families and an unemployed male could, therefore, receive unemployment benefit which exceeds a wage. More important than a transfer of costs is the provision of equal opportunities for Aboriginals to obtain employment.

Conclusion

81 The Committee believes that after a necessary peak of some years the need for Special Work Projects will gradually decline. The decline will result from a general improvement in education standards, increased employment opportunities generally as discussed in paragraphs 78 and 79, voluntary movement away from areas of excessive unemployment to areas of greater employment opportunities and government-assisted relocation to areas where job vacancies are available.

82 The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Special Work Projects Scheme be greatly expanded and that the Australian Government make the necessary funds available.

8 FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS

Administrative Arrangements

83 In paragraph 82 the Committee has recommended that the Special Work Projects Scheme be greatly expanded. In view of this recommendation certain administrative changes will follow.

84 The Committee was informed that the policy of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs is to devolve responsibility to other departments and agencies as appropriate. In accordance with this policy the Department of Aboriginal Affairs transferred Aboriginal health and education in the Northern Territory to the Australian Departments of Health and Education respectively in February 1973 and is presently negotiating with these Departments for the transfer of other substantial responsibilities.

85 With respect to Aboriginal employment the Department of Labor and Immigration is functionally responsible for Aboriginal unemployment relief under the RED Scheme and Aboriginal training under NEATS. As discussed in paragraph 14 the Department of Labor and Immigration has the main involvement in the Special Work Projects Scheme. The Committee sees considerable merit in the various schemes being administered by one department.

86 The Committee considers that as a corollary to its recommendation for an expanded Special Work Projects Scheme it is now an appropriate time for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to divest itself of the responsibility for the Scheme. The Department of Labor and Immigration should accept this

responsibility because it has the expertise in employment and training matters and the administrative machinery.

87 The Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs informed the Committee that there would need to be complete negotiations on the role of the Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Labor and Immigration so that there would be no doubt as to where each department stood in relation to the Special Work Projects Scheme in future. The Secretary also stated that there would need to be a formal agreement between the 2 Departments. The Committee believes that the policy of the Scheme and annual funding should be oversighted by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and that these roles should be written into the agreement. The agreement should also contain provisions for regular consultation at all levels on such matters as the community value of projects.

88 The Committee, therefore, recommends that negotiations between the Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Labor and Immigration commence immediately on the transfer of responsibility for the Special Work Projects Scheme to the Department of Labor and Immigration.

Staffing

89 As a consequence of the recommendation in paragraph 88 the staff of the Department of Labor and Immigration concerned with Aboriginal employment and training will need to be greatly increased.

90 Evidence was received by the Committee on the present level of staff in the Aboriginal employment sections of the Department of Labor and Immigration and found the position to be grossly inadequate. As shown in paragraph 18, the present

establishment of the Department of Labor and Immigration in the Aboriginal employment field is 132 and at the time of the recent imposition of Public Service staff ceilings only 81 of them were filled.

91 The Committee, therefore, recommends that :

- (a) the Department of Labor and Immigration be authorised to immediately fill all vacant positions in the Aboriginal employment sections; and
- (b) there be an immediate review of the establishment of the Aboriginal employment sections of the Department of Labor and Immigration which will carry out duties associated with the recommended expansion of the Special Work Projects Scheme.



9 THE ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

92 The terms and conditions of the Special Work Projects Scheme do not specifically allow for the participation of Australian Government departments and instrumentalities such as the Australian Postal Commission. Whilst the Committee does not advocate such participation it believes that the departments and instrumentalities should play a significant role in the employment and training of Aborigines. The Committee believes that, in regard to the employment and training of Aborigines, the Australian Government should match, within its own jurisdiction, the envisaged increased efforts of organisations participating in the Special Work Projects Scheme.

93 It is the policy of the Australian Government that its departments and instrumentalities employ a percentage of Aborigines corresponding to the percentage of Aborigines in the population, i.e. about 1%. The Office of the Public Service Board has taken steps to facilitate the employment of Aborigines in the Australian Public Service. These steps include the issue of circulars to all departments specifying in detail the role of the Board and the Board's requests to departments (see Appendices 4(a) and 4(b)).

94 On 1 October 1974 one thousand nine hundred and eighteen of Australian Government employees were Aborigines which is 0.71%. Of these 1,488 Aborigines were employed in the Northern Territory including 1,039 transferred on

15 March 1975 from employment on Training Allowance to award wage employment on settlements. This leaves 430 employed in the States and the A.C.T. Excluding the Northern Territory the percentage of Aborigines employed in the Australian Public Service in the States and the A.C.T. is 0.16%. The Committee notes that this percentage is well below the 1% target.

95 Of the Aborigines employed in the Australian Public Service the majority are employed in the lower echelons. This is illustrated by the fact that 97% of Aborigines have been recruited to the Fourth Division as against 71% for public servants generally. Only 3% of Aborigines have been recruited to the Second and Third Divisions as against 29% for public servants generally.

96 On the evidence before it the Committee notes with regret that Australian Government departments and instrumentalities with a presence in New South Wales towns with high Aboriginal population employ few, if any, Aborigines.

97 The Office of the Public Service Board informed the Committee of the various factors which influence the employment of Aboriginal staff in both city and country areas. The recruitment of permanent and temporary staff is subject to the merit principle of competitive entry against standards; in many instances potential Aboriginal staff do not have the required level of education and also do not have the required qualifications. The recruitment of persons for positions which do not require compliance with the Public Service Act (i.e. exempt employees), and the recruitment of some temporary employees, is largely the responsibility of either departments or their management in country towns.

98 There are also difficulties in relation to the geographic distribution of the Aboriginal people. In some western New South Wales towns, for example, where a high proportion of Aboriginals live there are limited job opportunities in the Australian Public Service while in Canberra the reverse applies.

99 Having noted the steps already taken by the Public Service Board to facilitate the employment of Aboriginals (Appendices 4(a) and 4(b)) the Committee concludes that these measures have not been effective in achieving the target of 1% of Aboriginals employed in the Australian Public Service. The Committee, therefore, believes that more active measures need to be taken by Australian Government departments and instrumentalities to employ and train Aboriginals. This could involve departments and instrumentalities nominating those positions which may be suitable, or which could be modified, to provide employment and/or training for Aboriginals. Further, in view of the disadvantages faced by Aboriginals in employment as discussed in paragraphs 34 to 37, special training positions should also be created. This initiative is of particular application to positions in departments or instrumentalities which have a presence in towns of high Aboriginal population. Aboriginals who are given such opportunities could, on attaining the required proficiency, be absorbed into the normal structure of departments or instrumentalities.

100 The Committee recognises that the creation of special training positions in commercial instrumentalities such as

the Australian Postal Commission may require special funding by the Australian Government.

101 The measures discussed in paragraphs 99 and 100 would, in the Committee's view, set an example to State Government organisations and local government authorities to provide employment and training opportunities for Aborigines.

102 The Committee, therefore, recommends that :

- (a) the Office of the Public Service Board and Australian Government departments actively recruit Aborigines for employment and training and create, as necessary, special training positions; and
- (b) Australian Government instrumentalities actively recruit Aborigines for employment and training and create, as necessary, special training positions funded by the Australian Government.

October 1975

M.D. CROSS
Chairman

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF WITNESSES

ANGEL, Mr R.J.	Director, Office of the Aboriginal Loans Commission.
BICKFORD, Mr R.G.	Engineer, Narrabri Municipal Council.
BINGE, Mrs E.	Private Citizen, Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla.
BRACEGIRDLE, Mr K.	Deputy Town Clerk, Moree Municipal Council.
BRADY, Mr N.A.	Inspecting Engineer, Building Construction and Maintenance Branch, N.S.W. Department of Public Works.
BURRELL, Mr C.J.	Operations Officer (Works Programming), N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service.
CARRETT, Mr B.	Acting Chief Executive Officer, Moree District Hospital.
CONWAY, Mr A.G.	Acting Vocational Officer, Department of Labor and Immigration.
CONWAY, Mr J.C.	First Assistant Commissioner, Personnel Management Division, Public Service Board.
CRAIGIE, Mr E.J.	Field Officer, Catholic Church, Moree.
CROWE, Mr W.L.	Manager, Building Construction and Maintenance Branch, N.S.W. Department of Public Works.
DEXTER, Mr B.G.	Secretary, Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

DRAPER, Mr L.T.	President, Moree Aboriginal Advancement Association.
DUNCAN, Mrs P.	Private Citizen, Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla.
FAGAN, Mr M.T.	Administrative Assistant in Charge of Personnel and Training Branch, N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service.
FOGARTY, Mr A.D.	First Assistant Secretary, Manpower (Development and Operations), No.1 Division, Department of Labor and Immigration.
GIBSON, Mr T.M.	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Employment Section, Department of Labor and Immigration.
HARRISON, Mrs M.T.	Principal Executive Officer, Aboriginal Employment Section Department of Labor and Immigration.
HAY, Mr F.C.	Senior Vocational Officer, Aboriginal Employment Section Department of Labor and Immigration.
HAYES, Mr F.D.	Assistant Director, Community Services, N.S.W. Department of Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs.
HIPPI, Mr A.	Private Citizen, Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla.
HIPPI, Mr R.	Private Citizen, Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla.
HODGETTS, Mr B.J.	Assistant Secretary, Secretariat Branch, Department of Labor and Immigration.

HOPE, Mr D.A.C.	Assistant Director, Policy Review Section, Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
JAMES, Ald. P.C.	Mayor, Moree Municipal Council.
KIRBY, Mr P.E.F.	Acting First Assistant Secretary, Manpower (Development and Operations), No.1 Division, Department of Labor and Immigration.
LEWIS, Mr G.K.	Officer-in-Charge, Aboriginal Employment Section (N.S.W.), Department of Labor and Immigration.
LUGTON, Mr G.S.	Chief, Forestry Operations Division, Forestry Commission of N.S.W.
MACKENZIE, Mr P.M.	Assistant Secretary, Policy Development and Review Branch, Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
McKENZIE, Mr K.C.	Deputy Secretary, Department of Labor and Immigration.
McCALLUM, Mr B.G.	Assistant Commissioner, Personnel Policy Branch, Public Service Board.
McGREGOR, Mr P.S.	Employment Office Manager, Commonwealth Employment Service, Narrabri.
McINTOSH, Mr D.	Private Citizen, Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla.
MALCOLM, Dr W.B.	Chief Biologist, N.S.W. State Fisheries.
MAYNARD, Ms L.A.	Archaeologist, Aboriginal Relics Section, N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service.
MILLER, Ald. V.A.W.	Mayor, Narrabri Municipal Council.

MORGAN, Mr D.R.	Registrar, Moree Technical College.
MUNRO, Mr L.J.	Private Citizen, Moree.
NEWMAN, Mr J.C.	Representative, Soil Conservation Service of N.S.W.
NICHOLS, Mr K.C.	County Clerk, Gwydir Valley County Council.
RANSOM, Rev. I.F.	Church of England Rector, Boggabilla.
RITTER, Mr R.A.	Accountant, Narrabri Municipal Council.
SLIGAR, Mrs L.P.	Acting Director, Equal Employment Opportunity Section, Public Service Board.
SMITH, Mr J.	Member, Moree Aboriginal Advancement Association.
STEVENS, Ald. J.A.K.	Alderman, Moree Municipal Council and Proprietor of an Engineering Business.
STONE, Mr J.G.	Acting Assistant Principal Officer (Management), Division of Research Services, N.S.W. Department of Agriculture.
THOMAS, Mr B.K.	Director, Program Development and Review Branch, Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
TURNBULL, Mr R.G.	Assistant Secretary, Industry Branch 'C', Department of Labor and Immigration.
WHITTON, Mrs J.	Private Citizen, Toomelah Mission, Boggabilla.
WILLIAMS, Mr P.R.	Senior Project Officer, Community Development Branch, Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
WILLIAMS, Mr T.S.	President, Narrabri Aboriginal Advancement Association.

SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS
TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The aims of grants made under the Special Work Projects Scheme are :

- (a) to alleviate unemployment in areas of high Aboriginal unemployment where employment opportunities are lacking and/or
- (b) to provide training opportunities for permanent employment for unemployed or under-employed Aboriginals.

Finance made available by way of grant by the Australian Government can be applied to projects carried out by local government authorities, State government departments, Aboriginal organisations and other organisations, including private employers (but see paragraph 10) for the purpose of providing employment and/or training for Aboriginals generally in accordance with the following criteria :

1. Award wages must be paid.
2. To be eligible for such employment, Aboriginals must be unemployed or under-employed and unable to obtain alternative suitable employment. If not already registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service, unemployed Aboriginals will be required to register.
3. Selection of employees should be undertaken in association with the Commonwealth Employment Service or where this is impracticable, the C.E.S. should be advised of the names of the employees recruited.
4. The length of the period covered by grants will be determined on each application. Generally grants will not be made for a period of less than three months or more than one year unless a specific training program requiring a longer period is guaranteed as in paragraph 7.

5. Possible work projects should be developed and discussed with the local Aboriginal community.
6. Wherever possible, persons employed on Special Work Projects should move on to subsequent unsubsidised employment or employment under the Employment Training Scheme, administered by the Department of Labor, either with the applicant authority or with other employers. An indication of the willingness of the employing authority to offer subsequent employment or participate in the Employment Training Scheme will be a factor in determining grants.
7. Preference will be given to projects of special value to the Aboriginal community. Special value may lie in the nature of the work project undertaken (e.g. a project providing or improving community facilities or generating further employment opportunities) or in the project's value as a training scheme for later employment within or outside the employing authority. Consideration will be given to longer term projects when a specific training project on behalf of one or more Aboriginal trainees is submitted and approved. In such cases a guarantee of subsequent employment for at least an equivalent period will be required of the employing authority.
8. Where the work project is in the nature of a temporary employment relief measure only and has no special value as outlined in paragraph 7 above, priority will be given to requests in areas where Aboriginal unemployment is most prevalent. In such cases grants may be made for :
 - (a) wages and wage on-costs; and, if justified by the nature of the project;
 - (b) materials, tools, plant hire, transport, and supervision up to a cost of half of the total wages cost, i.e. a ratio of 2 : 1, wages: materials and supervision (but see (d));

- (c) in the case of Aboriginal organisations, capital equipment;
 - (d) private employers will generally not be eligible for grants for materials, tools etc.
9. Where the work project is of special value as in paragraph 7 above, and requires the employing authority to make further provision for the 'materials' etc. component the ration of 2 : 1 need not apply.
10. Private employers who are establishing new enterprises in areas of high Aboriginal unemployment prospects in the industry concerned may be eligible for grants.
11. In all cases, the employing authority will be required to present a statement to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs showing :
- (a) number of employees (positions) sought;
 - (b) period of employment (including preferred months if applicable);
 - (c) a description of the work or training to be undertaken and, if applicable, its value to the Aboriginal community or Aboriginal employees;
 - (d) location of work or training;
 - (e) area from which Aboriginal employees will be recruited;
 - (f) amount of grant requested and the relative estimated costs, for each individual project; of
 - (1) Aboriginal wages including on-costs;
 - (2) materials, tools, plant hire, transport;
 - (3) supervision;
 - (4) in the case of Aboriginal organisations only, the cost of capital equipment, if relevant.

- (g) name and address of nearest Department of Labor's representative or agent.
12. The attached form should be used for applications. Applications for a financial year should reach the Department of Aboriginal Affairs no later than the preceding January.
13. A copy of the application to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs should be sent to the local Commonwealth Employment Service representative. The application should be discussed and developed in conjunction with the Manager of the local Employment Office, Department of Aboriginal Affairs officers as available, and representatives of the local Aboriginal community. The Department of Labor's comments on all applications will be expedited if prior discussions with the Department of Labor's representative are held. The Manager should be contacted approximately one month before the conclusion of the project so that future employment prospects can be assessed.
14. In the case of local government authorities in New South Wales, Certificates of Expenditure setting out the work undertaken, number and names of men employed during the period and providing a dissection between (a) wages and wage on-costs, (b) tools, materials, plant hire, etc. should be forwarded at quarterly intervals to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, P.O. Box 385, North Sydney, N.S.W. 2060. In the case of other employing authorities, audited statements setting out the above information should be forwarded at the completion of the project.

APPENDIX 3

SPECIAL WORK PROJECTS ON WHICH EVIDENCE WAS RECEIVED

Local Government Organisations

Moree Municipal Council

The Moree Municipal Council is not undertaking any Special Work Projects at the present time. It has, however, administered a number of projects in the past involving the employment of a number of Aborigines in the concreting of paths leading towards the 2 Aboriginal Reserves in Moree (Wiradjari (Meli Crescent) and Stanley Village).

Gwydir Valley County Council

The Gwydir Valley County Council owns and runs the Moree Regional Abattoir. The Council currently employs 12 Aborigines under a Special Work Projects grant of \$46,000. These employees are receiving training and gaining experience in the trimming of carcasses, preparation and packing of offals, salting and rolling hides, treating by-products materials and organising and storing packs of meat and offals.

Since 1970 the Council has been associated with various training schemes for Aborigines. In 1970-71 the Council employed 25 Aborigines under the then Employment Training Scheme and 13 of these are still employed; 3 as slaughtermen, 1 as a leading hand and 1 as a tractor driver. The Council more recently employed 20 Aborigines under a Special Work Projects grant of \$46,000 and of these 11 are still employed, 8 as slaughtermen.

Boolooroo Shire Council

The Boolooroo Shire Council currently employs 7 Aboriginals under a Special Work Projects grant of \$100,000. This project of 12 months duration involves the construction of verandahs, bathrooms and laundries and paint work on cottages at the Toomelah Reserve. Those employed on the project are receiving training and gaining experience in carpentry, concrete work, draining, painting and general building practice.

The Council has completed 3 Special Work Projects, namely drainage work in Boggabilla (\$26,000), park improvements and stormwater drainage in Boggabilla (\$25,960), foot-path construction in Boggabilla and drainage works, playground construction and hall construction at Toomelah Reserve (\$58,000). During the course of these projects the Council required additional staff and 2 Aboriginals were recruited to the permanent staff from those employed under the Scheme.

Narrabri Municipal Council

The Narrabri Municipal Council recently received a Special Work Projects grant of \$56,816 to employ 5 Aboriginals for 12 months on reconstruction work at the Narrabri Showground. This project aims to provide training in carpentry, fencing, drainage, concreting and machine plant operation.

In 1974 the Council received a Special Work Projects grant of \$36,192 to employ Aboriginals on kerbing, guttering and development work at the Showground. One Aboriginal employed on this project is still employed by the Council.

Moree District Hospital

The Moree District Hospital recently completed a Special Work Project which involved the employment of 1 girl in the hospital's administrative section and 2 girls as wardsmails in the domestic and housekeeping section.

One wardsmail resigned towards the end of the project and took up permanent employment at the Moree Abattoirs. The other wardsmail is currently employed on the hospital's permanent relieving staff. The administrative trainee is receiving further training for a period of 12 months under NEATS.

New South Wales Government Organisations

New South Wales Department of Agriculture

The New South Wales Department of Agriculture was granted \$46,000 in July 1975 to employ 8 Aborigines as clerical assistants for 12 months under the Special Work Projects Scheme. Five Aborigines (4 female, 1 male) were employed as at September 1975. Of the remaining 3 available positions, 1 was in the process of being filled.

The project aims to offer training and experience in all aspects of office work and to encourage enrolment in part-time technical college courses. It is expected that within the 12 months these employees should be trained sufficiently to assume positions within the Department or obtain permanent positions in other departments or the private sector.

New South Wales Forestry Commission

The New South Wales Forestry Commission has received Special Work Projects grants totalling \$397,000. The project is a continuing one with approval given to employ 10 Aborigines in early 1973; an additional 10 were offered employment in June 1973 and a further 10 in January 1974. Subsequent withdrawals left the Commission with a quota of 28. The number employed fluctuates from time to time but 26 is about the maximum. At August 1975 the number employed was 22 distributed over 8 districts.

The work involved in the project is unskilled labouring and operation of chain saws and other plant.

During the course of this continuing scheme 3 Aborigines have been transferred to the permanent workforce. Some Aborigines who are employed under the Special Work Project at the moment would be considered satisfactory for permanent employment if vacancies existed.

New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service

The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service has been involved in the Special Work Projects Scheme since May 1973 and up until the current financial year has received Special Work Projects grants totalling \$198,160. As at September 1975 ten Aborigines were employed on general park management duties and 3 on kangaroo skull defleshing.

In 1975-76 the Service was allocated funds to employ 10 Aborigines for 12 months.

New South Wales Department of Public Works

The New South Wales Department of Public Works recently received a Special Work Projects grant of \$10,000 to employ 9 Aboriginals in concrete paving work for 5 weeks. The Aboriginals will receive training and gain experience in form-work construction, excavation, levelling and concrete mixing.

New South Wales Soil Conservation Service

Under a Special Work Projects grant of \$16,000 the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service is employing 2 Aboriginals for approximately 10 months to assist in sand dune stabilisation. The Aboriginals will receive training and gain experience in seeding, planting, seed collection, application of fertiliser, brush matting, erection of protective and dune forming fencing and operation of machinery such as tractor, planter, fertiliser, broadcaster, mower and chain saw.

New South Wales Department of Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs

The New South Wales Department of Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs received a grant of \$25,800 to employ a number of Aboriginal girls under the Special Work Projects Scheme in August 1975. Employment under the Scheme will commence on 1 December 1975 for 3 clerical assistants and 1 typist should suitable applicants be available.

The trainees will occupy newly created positions and employment will be continuous and of a permanent nature provided their performance is satisfactory.

New South Wales State Fisheries

Four Aborigines are presently employed by the New South Wales State Fisheries under a Special Work Projects grant of \$114,000 comprising \$44,000 for salaries and \$70,000 for additional laboratory space.

The Aborigines are employed as technical assistants on Fisheries Research Stations for 2 years and will receive training and gain experience in fish, oyster and prawn farming techniques.

APPENDIX 4(a)

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

70/4292

P.S.B. CIRCULAR NO. 1973/6

ALL DEPARTMENTS

20 February 1973

EMPLOYMENT OF ABORIGINALS

In August 1971 the Board designated officers within the Offices of its Public Service Inspectors as special placement officers to be responsible for matters involving the recruitment, placement or employment of Aborigines in the Commonwealth Service. P.S.B. Circular 1971/14 of 30 April 1971 had earlier designated special placement officers to be responsible for matters related to the employment of physically handicapped and elderly persons.

2 The aim of the Circular is to inform departments of further measures designed to facilitate employment of Aborigines in the Service. These measures are taken within the context of the Board's developing policy on this issue. On the advice of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs the Board interprets an 'Aboriginal' to mean :

a person of Aboriginal or Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he is associated.

3 While Aborigines are already employed in Commonwealth departments, the Board is of the view that new measures are required which, having regard to the increasing numbers of Aborigines seeking employment in urban and non-urban areas, and to the rising levels of educational attainment of young Aborigines, will give them increasing access to employment in the Service. In addition, such new measures are required to permit the Service to utilise fully the particular skills and talents that Aborigines may contribute. These measures, which are taken in the context of the principle of open competition on merit, are detailed below.

4

For its part the Board will be :

- . extending recruitment activities to provide Aboriginals with greater awareness of job opportunities available in the Commonwealth Service and greater understanding of the selection processes for entry to the Service. Specifically this will entail liaison by Board and departmental recruitment officers with Aboriginal community organisations and other relevant recruitment activities;
- . liaising with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Labor on job opportunities for, and placements of, Aboriginals;
- . consulting with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and other departments particularly concerned with Aboriginal education, training and employment, on what role the Board might play in relevant activity, such as community organised workforce entry training schemes - e.g. by providing assistance in the conduct of segments of courses oriented towards the Service;
- . examining tests and other selection processes to ensure that they give full opportunities for all candidates to establish their relative claims for employment;
- . identifying positions, particularly those involving the provision of services directly to Aboriginals, in respect of which an Aboriginal background could be a significant factor in the efficient performance of the duties concerned.

5

Departments are requested :

- . to review, as appropriate, the form content and placement of their publicity regarding job vacancies to increase the awareness of Aboriginals of job opportunities for which they are eligible. Given the current general level of educational attainment of Aboriginals, particular attention would seem to be required at this stage in respect of Fourth Division

manipulative, keyboard, clerical assistant and similar types of positions. It should, however, be borne in mind that the levels of educational attainment are rising and that increasing numbers of Aborigines are attaining qualifications appropriate to Third Division status;

- . to ensure that induction training schemes take account of the diversity of the backgrounds of new entrants;
- . where they have the authority to engage staff under exemption to co-operate in achieving the objectives described in this Circular.

6 In line with the growing numbers of Aborigines seeking employment and having regard to their changing geographical distribution and levels of educational attainment, it is desirable that the number and proportion of Aborigines employed in the Service will rise accordingly.

7 The Board has decided to review at regular intervals the numbers of Aborigines employed in the Service in the light of available educational attainment and demographic information.

8 The List and Index of Operative Circulars should be amended as follows :

List

Under 1973, Circular No. 1973/6 -
'Employment of Aborigines'

Index

Insert - Aborigines, Employment of - C73/6
- Employment of Aborigines - C73/6

(H.B. MacDONALD)
Secretary

APPENDIX 4(b)

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

73/3176

P.S.B. CIRCULAR No. 1973/46

5 August 1973

ALL DEPARTMENTS

EMPLOYMENT OF ABORIGINALS : FURTHER MEASURES

In P.S.B. Circular 1973/6 of 20 February 1973 titled 'Employment of Aborigines' the Board announced a series of measures designed to facilitate employment of Aborigines in the Service. The purpose of this Circular is to inform departments of further measures designed to meet the goals announced in P.S.B. Circular 1973/6.

2 In paragraph 4 of P.S.B. Circular 1973/6, the Board indicated that it would be :

identifying positions, particularly those involving the provision of services directly to Aborigines in respect of which an Aboriginal background could be a significant factor in the efficient performance of the duties concerned.

Study of this issue has indicated that there are a number of positions where there is a need for effective communication with Aborigines; the work of Liaison Officers in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Vocational Officers in the Department of Labor are two of the more obvious examples. It is apparent also that there are groups of positions or individual positions in a number of departments in locations in which services are provided directly to significant numbers of Aborigines. In relation to positions of this type departments are requested :

to review promptly their organisations and establishments in locations, and in respect of functions, in which services are provided

to significant numbers of Aborigines. The purpose of this review would be to identify existing jobs or potential jobs for which an Aboriginal background 'could be a significant factor in the efficient performance of the duties concerned'. In reviewing establishments, departments should have in mind the question of whether adequate service is currently provided to Aboriginal clients having regard to the observed reluctance of Aborigines to enter and be served in offices staffed wholly by non-Aborigines. For example, in counter operations where there is potential for a significant number of Aboriginal clients to be served, departments should examine their possible needs for individual positions ultimately to be filled by staff with a capacity to communicate effectively with Aboriginal clients.

- . to undertake prompt organisation and/or establishment action in relation to the abovementioned positions so identified.
- . to amend, in consultation with the Board's Office, the duty statements for such positions to reflect the need for the occupants to be able to communicate effectively with Aboriginal people in addition to the normal duties and requirements of the positions concerned.
- . where applicable, to indicate on the recruit-demand form (P.S.B. 1) the need for recruits to communicate effectively with Aboriginal clients.
- . where positions of this type above the base range are created or fall vacant, to consider the need to advertise both within the Service and externally. In publicising vacant positions outside the Service, particular care should be taken to ensure that the advertisements are likely to reach as wide a range of potential candidates amongst the Aboriginal community as possible and that they clearly state the essential requirements of the position.

to note that Public Service Inspectors may arrange to be represented on the selection committees for such positions.

3 Departments are requested to give particular attention to factors affecting the retention of Aboriginal staff.

4 The List and Index of Operative Circulars should be amended as follows :

LIST

Under 1973, Circular No. 1973/46
'Employment of Aboriginals : Further Measures'

INDEX

Insert - Aboriginals, Employment of : Further
Measures - C73/46
- Employment of Aboriginals : Further
Measures - C73/46

(H.B. MacDONALD)
Secretary

R75/687