



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

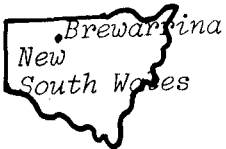
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ACROSS AUSTRALIA

FROM TEACHER TO TEACHER

ABORIGINAL STUDIES
AT BREWARRINA CENTRAL SCHOOL

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In this brief article Miss Roberts describes some of the activities undertaken at Brewarrina Central School within a course on Aboriginal studies.

This article should be read in association with Mrs Coffey's article which is presented in the section "Aboriginal and Islander Views". The cover photo shows Mrs Coffey talking to children in 3rd/4th class about her life and struggles for her Aboriginal people.

For the past eighteen months we have been attempting to get a course in Aboriginal Studies under way in our school.

This has involved fighting the idea that Australian history begins in 1788. We have provided a study of Aboriginal culture and society before the British invasion, followed by the impact of white settlement, present struggles for land rights and movements which aim at guaranteeing Aboriginal people justice and equality in Australian society.

We have called on local people and organisations to give us an understanding of rural problems confronting all people living in country areas (unemployment, transport problems, lack of recreational facilities, so-called 'natural' disasters such as droughts, floods, locust plagues, poor housing, bad health, lack of educational facilities).

Aboriginal parents have visited the school to talk to the children about their life and struggles to improve conditions for their people. Many interesting people from outside the school have given talks on their professions and travels. All this information has then

been collated and presented in leaflet and poster form together with photos printed by the students themselves.

Two major excursions have been undertaken using Secondary Grants' finances and to a lesser extent Disadvantaged Schools' money. The first was to Sydney in October last year to visit Aboriginal organisations in order to assess what urban people are striving for. The second was to Central Australia this year in July. It was a camping trip which lasted for two weeks. It enabled us to look at what Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are working for in this year when Land Rights should become a reality. The highlight of the trip was a meeting with Wenton Rapunja, the leader of the Central Australian Lands' Council. It took place in the dry river-bed of the Todd. For the forty children who went it was the educational experience of a lifetime.

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PALM ISLAND STATE SCHOOL

COMMUNITY BASED WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

W.A. Blackly,
Palm Island

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

I arrived on Palm Island on the 8th September, 1975, and faced 24 Aboriginal children who could barely write their names, didn't seem to understand basic computation and were too self-conscious to draw. What on earth was I to do?

The children were most willing to colour in, do simple addition, copy from the blackboard, look at pictures in books or listen to stories, but when I tried to extend this into more complicated work I found a brick wall - they wouldn't respond. So I gave them what they wanted. We did simple additions for whole sessions, copying writing for whole sessions, and some simple phonic card games.

The kids and I were bored, but boredom was preferable to a battle. Then I tried educational games. All day we played with different kits. The children reluctantly went along. The educational