

improved, say officials in Moora

RELATIONS between the Aboriginal and white communities in Moora are now good, according to the administrator of the Central Midlands Aboriginal Progress Association, Mrs Beverley Yappo.

Her comments are backed by shire officials and the police. Recently a police officer praised the town as being one without gangs of troublemakers — black or white.

The progress association, with Mrs Yappo at its helm, has been actively helping the Aboriginal community since it was established in 1974.

It has four main goals:

- To promote overall devel-

opment of the Aboriginal community.

- To contribute to its self-support through development and economic projects.

- To promote education, health services, employment and housing.

- To encourage and develop mutual trust and friendship in relations with the white community.

The association has an office and hall in the town which are used for meetings, self-help projects and as an advice centre.

Mrs Yappo assists Aborigines with problems such as dealing with correspondence from government departments.

- A play group and sewing classes are held in the hall and there are regular Wednesday

lunches, popular with elderly people needing social contact.

Homework classes and special tuition are provided one evening each week. The children are also taken by tribal elders on occasional bush excursions so they can learn the traditions of living off the land.

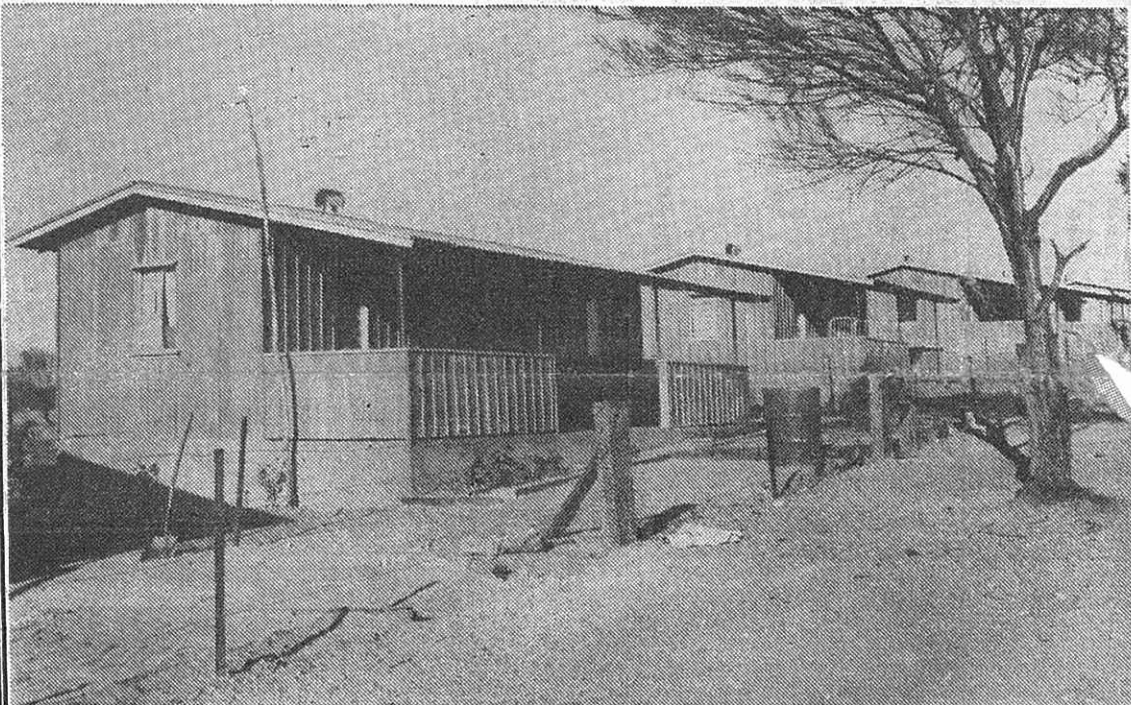
The association has also created work projects for Aboriginal men. One involved the collection and sale of old railway sleepers.

Many young Aborigines who use the hall are in basketball teams. There are four Aboriginal teams in the basketball association and two played each other in the regional grand final.

"It's good to see the recognition and acceptance on both sides," Mrs Yappo said.



Mrs Beverley Yappo, administrator of the Central Midlands Aboriginal Progress Association.



Aboriginal homes in Moora in the early 1960s.

The sudden death of sad slum

ABORIGINES in Moora have come a long way since the late 1970s, when many lived in an old reserve which was acknowledged to be a squalid, rickety slum.

The Moora fringe-camp was one of the last of the big Aboriginal reserves to be closed under the Federal and State Governments' rehousing schemes.

It was shut down in 1978. In one day, families were moved from the unhealthy, rusted tin huts into 11 new houses and three pensioner flats.

Today about 38 Aboriginal families live in neat State

Housing Commission homes.

There is no ghetto in the town.

Shire clerk Neil Warne said that the council had an understanding with the Housing Commission that homes for Abor-

igines would not be clustered in one area, but spread throughout Moora.

"Our system is working quite well," he said.

Three additional houses were expected to become available this financial year.

Publicity

Mr Warne recalled the bad publicity which once surrounded the reserve. The shire has newspaper cuttings in its records dating from those days, including one Sunday newspaper headline from 1976 which said: "Moora the killer — misery and despair in this dreadful hole."

But the accusations and the problems have ended. The squalor, the health crisis and the tensions are now a thing of the past.

The rehousing programme solved the major problems and relationships between Aborigines, police and others in the town have never been better.



The old Moora reserve — a 1961 photograph.