

AN AUSTRALIA DAY MESSAGE

"Anniversary Day calls urgently for an assessment by everyone of our success in assimilating Aborigines," the Chairman of the Aborigines Welfare Board, Mr. A. G. Kingsmill, said in an Australia Day message.

"When the first white settlers arrived here 175 years ago, it is estimated there were about 300,000 aborigines in Australia.

"From the many thousands who lived in New South Wales, the numbers of full-bloods dwindled quickly before the surging development of the new settlements.

"The result was that by 1882 when the first official count of aborigines was made in the State, there were 6,540 full-bloods and 2,379 half-castes.

"Twenty years later there were 2,786 full-bloods and 4,148 half-castes.

"Today there are about 200 full-bloods and more than 13,000 half-caste and persons of lesser caste.

"Of this 13,000, more than half are less than half-caste to nearly white.

"This pattern of change was the experience in most other lands where an indigenous population had to yield to the new and intensive methods of a more highly developed group.

"As in these other lands, our community is facing the problem of absorbing on an equal status, the descendants of the indigenous people into the modern, highly organised and competitive society which exists today.

"The past generation has seen a greatly sharpened awareness of the problems involved in bringing about full assimilation of aborigines.

"Governments have long spent money in increasing amounts to give greater encouragement of incentive among aborigines and to bring into being a set of conditions which will aid its expression.

"They have provided housing on reserves for those unwilling or unprepared to make the exacting move into modern urban living conditions.

"Good homes have been provided for many others to live in cities and towns.

"Most of the aboriginal children in New South Wales attend normal primary and secondary schools, and numbers in the isolated aboriginal schools are declining.

"Children are staying at school longer and are achieving higher standards.

"Community bodies and individuals among the white population more and more are giving social support to the efforts of Government in these fields, and there is heartening response to them from the community in general.

"The modern story of aborigine-white relations in New South Wales has been disfigured little by prejudice but there has been an attitude at least of indifference in some sections of the white community, which at times has inhibited the fullest participation of aborigines in rewarding work and in recreation.

"On the other hand many aborigines—including some who are nearly white—have taken the attitude that this

One of La Perouse's best known residents, Mr. George Longbottom (centre) talks with the Chairman of the Aborigines Welfare Board, Mr. Kingsmill (left) and Vice-chairman, Professor Elkin

