Dear Kids,

I am sure you will all be interested in news of Neville
Thorne, the former Walgett boy now at Armidale High
School.

Neville has kindly written his experiences away from
home for our page under the title “My First Year at
St. John’s Hostel and Armidale High” and we are
indeed glad to publish it.

Here it is:

“When I first arrived in Armidale early this year, I
knew there would be many surprises awaiting me. I
was met at the railway station by Mrs. Passey, a member
of the Assimilation Association for Aborigines. Mrs.
Passey’s husband is a lecturer at the University of New
England. I was taken to the hostel by Mrs. Passey,
introduced to Mr. Peters and was shown my living
quarters.

“The following Monday, I spent my first day at
Armidale High School and was enrolled in fourth year,
my first lesson being woodwork. Armidale High School
is situated on a small hill next to the New England
Highway. In 1961, I believe, the school had witnessed
many major changes in its appearance. At the back of

Our writer, Neville Thorne, pictured on the extreme left
of the back row was a prominent member of Walgett
Central School’s Tennis team before going to Armidale.
Others in the group are, back row from the left, Phillip
Hall, Tony Azevedo, B. Hardy, J. Andrews and Mr. David
Tribe (coach); front row, Beryl Gribble, Pam Lucas,
Gararda Roggeveen and Valerie Donnelly

the older buildings, there are eleven new rooms plus
the new Assembly and Dance Hall. A new oval and
shower rooms have been built in front of the main
buildings.

“I played cricket at the beginning of the year as a
summer sport then football in the winter. At present
I am playing basketball. I have represented the school
in the first XV Rugby Union team, swimming and
athletics.

At the high school, there are about eight or nine other
aborigines, two of them are girls. Two, in particular,
are doing quite well. They are Ray Beale in fifth year
and Terry Widders in third year. Both of them board
at the hostel.

However, back at the hostel where I spend most of my
time, it is like another home to me. We are well looked
after by the Matron and Mr. Peters in many ways.
At first I lived in Dorm. One, but later I was moved
to Dorm. Four and Five which are the Fourth and Fifth
Year dormitories. There are many sporting activities
going on at the hostel almost every afternoon. We
acquaint ourselves with tennis (there are two tennis
courts), touch football, soccer, table tennis and cricket.

“On the academic side, we have two hours set aside
every school night for study, revision and homework.
Third, fourth and fifth years may come back after
showers at a quarter to nine and do extra work if they
wish.

“Since I have arrived, I have made many new friends
and I have been going regularly to school socials. I
am proud to be an example to my race and to those
aborigines who seek the honour of gaining a higher
education. I will be continuing my studies and finally
hope to be a schoolteacher.

“In concluding my account I wish to express my
utmost and deepest gratitude to Mr. J. Taaffe, Mr. D.
Tribe and the staff of Walgett Central School for their
help and encouragement in assisting me to be where I
am to-day.”

Thanks Neville and keep up the good work.

Your sincere Pal,