

Newspaper criticises Aborigine position

LONDON, Wednesday (A.A.P.). — Australia would have to solve the problem of its black minority, the Guardian said in an editorial today.

Canberra Times
18th March 1965

"The story of race relations in Australia has had many regrettable features," the newspaper said.

"The Aboriginal people, in one place after another, have lost what protection they had by the designation of reserves, without any certainty of gaining an equivalent position as free citizens.

"Is the story repeating itself again in Victoria?"

"Here, there is still one Aboriginal reserve at Lake Tyers, with 100 people living on it.

"Legislation is now to be introduced into the State Assembly with a view to closing this station and moving the people on it into homes elsewhere in the State."

Security loss

Reserves, which at least had given some security and some sense of tribal identity, perhaps at the cost of stagnation, had been broken up and their inhabitants thrown on to the labour market quite unequipped to compete in it.

"In this instance, as in most others, it is not proposed that any sort of compensation will be paid to the people at Lake Tyers for the loss of what rights they have enjoyed; and their friends complain that they are being given no proper training to prepare them for life in, or on the fringe of, white civilisation.

The editorial said aborigines were still economically important in rural society in the north and central parts of the country.

"If the Victorian Legislature contemplates some scheme of transfer which embraces training for settlement and employment within the white community, the Aborigines might gain by the loss of Lake Tyers."

Otherwise, they were only too likely "to sink into the sump of Australian society," the newspaper said.