

Canberra, A.C.T.

31 OCT 1972

# In Peking we're people - Aborigines

## PEKING

A group of nine Australian Aborigines in Peking as guests of the Chinese said today they were being treated like human beings "for the first time in our lives".

The group, who arrived in China for a month's visit a week ago, said they had taken every opportunity during their stay to tell their Chinese hosts "about the plight of the Aboriginal people" in Australia.

Miss Cheryl Buchanan, an attractive 18-year-old student from Brisbane said: "It's all so bloody marvellous. There's just no pressure on us. We are being treated as human beings for the first time in our lives. At home we are treated like animals or inferior beings".

Another member of the group, from Brisbane, Miss Lilla Watson said: "This is my first trip out of Australia and it makes you realise what a racist country Australia is".

The leader of the group, Mr Charles Dixon, of Sydney, has been asking for Chinese help in forming an international lobby to pressure the Australian Government into recognising Aborigines' needs.

The group, whose expenses in Peking are being met by Chinese hosts, are staying at the plush Peking Hotel, the most comfortable in the capital and reserved for specially honoured guests.

The visitors have been riding round in the city style in a fleet of Chinese-made Shanghai limousines and attending banquets organised in their honour, at which they have told guests about what they term the "cultural genocide" in Australia.

The party is scheduled to leave Peking tomorrow for inner Mongolia to study conditions among Mongolians, a national minority group in China.