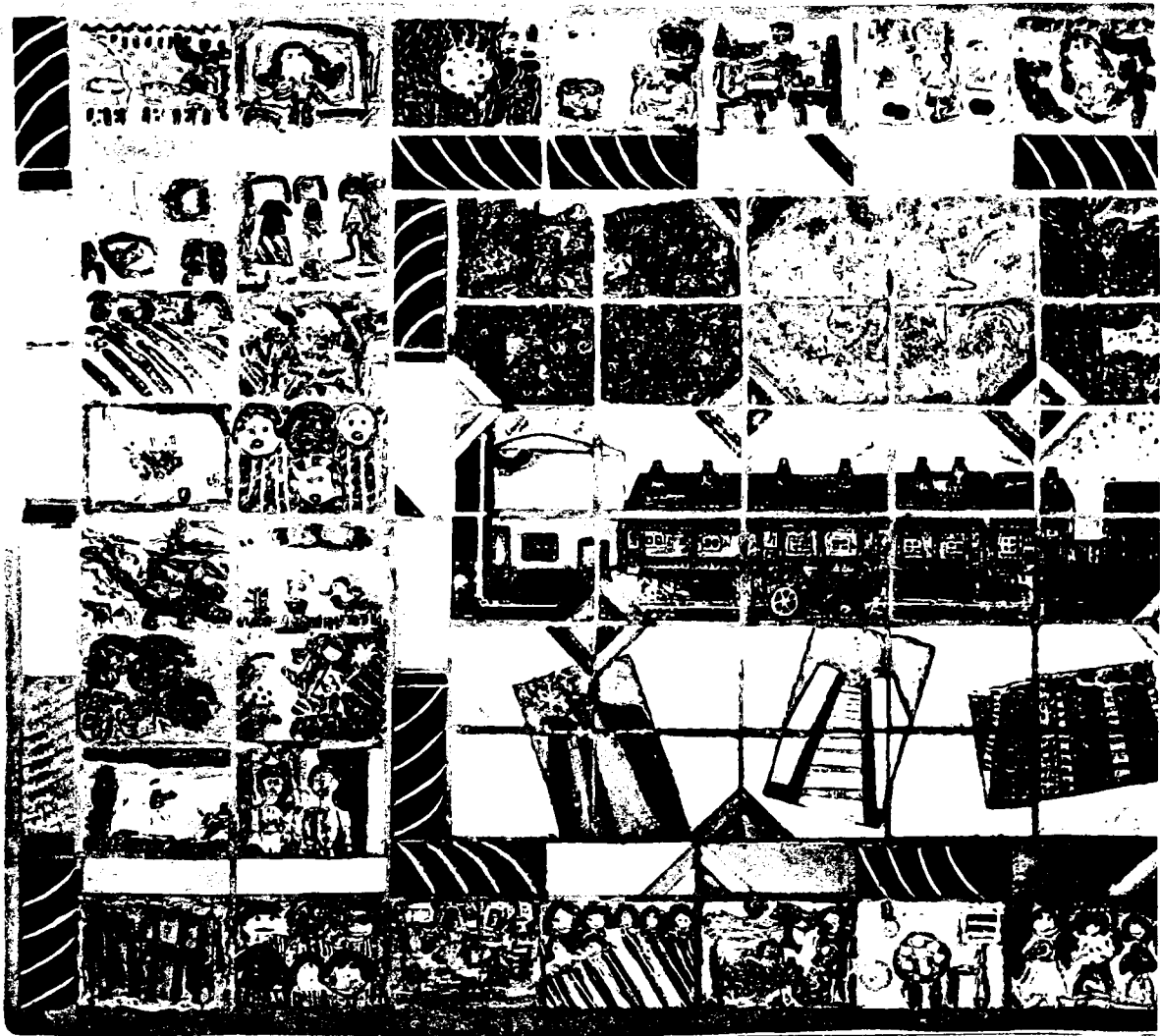


# SOUTH SYDNEY COMMUNITY AID CO-OP

118 REGENT STREET, REDFERN, 2016. PHONE 699-4073, 699-2260, 699-9391



Portion of Mural at Redfern Public School  
South Sydney Visual History Project

## ANNUAL REPORT 1984

I N D E X

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## OBJECTIVES

1. Primarily provide social welfare by assisting in the relief of poverty, distress, sickness, suffering, destitution or helplessness;
2. Provide an enquiry, answering, and advisory service to assist with the above project;
3. Co-operate with and assist in the co-ordination of groups and agencies working in the area;
4. Sponsor and encourage continued research into the needs of the community and apply those findings for the development of the programme;
5. Focus attention on any social needs in the area and enable local residents to meet these needs;
6. Stimulate and provide channels for individual and group participation in the development of services in the area;
7. Any other object consistent with community aid, the Board and/or members may adopt from time to time at meetings called pursuant to these rules.

## QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Every member shall hold at least one share;
2. Membership may be corporate or individual;
3. Agencies actively engaged in social services in the area may apply, or be invited to apply, for membership and shall be designated as "Agency Members";
4. Groups and organisations interested in social services in the area, but not actively engaged, may apply or be invited to apply, for membership and be designated "Society Members";
5. Corporate, agency, society or organisational members shall be represented by individuals nominated in writing by their organisation as their representative or alternate representative;
6. Each member, whether individual, corporate, agency, society or organisational, in attendance at meetings, shall have one vote only as per Rule 55, regardless of the number of shares held; and there shall be no proxy votes as per Section 86(9)(c) of the Act;
7. There shall be no joint shareholding;
8. A member who has had no contact with the Society for a period of two years may have their share or shares forfeited as provided in Rule 22.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- 1983/84  
 -----

Margaret Barry  
 Helen Bonanno  
 Rita Bruce  
 Sandra Ceissman  
 Terry Folan  
 Jacques Gonthier  
 Mick Ibbett  
 Colin James  
 Vivi Germanos  
 Beth Mitchell  
 Kim Pavlovich  
 Marion Simon  
 Harold Smart  
 Ken Smith  
 Fred Turvey

COMMITTEES

Management Committee: Margaret Barry, Helen Bonanno (Convenor)  
 Ken Smith, Kim Pavlovich, Neil Stuart.

Migrant Committee: Helen Bonanno, Vivi Germanos (Convenor),  
 Lil James, Kim Pavlovich, Evelyn Webb, Mijung Paik, Neil Stuart.

Aboriginal Committee: Rita Bruce (Convenor), Marion Simon,  
 Colin James, Terry Folan, Sandy Ceissman, Miles Lalor, Brenda  
 Maling, Meropy Bernhard, Neil Stuart.

Festival Committee: Terry Folan, Fred Turvey, Brenda Maling,  
 Beth Mitchell.

Environment Committee: Fred Turvey, Colin James.

We are members of:

Australian Council of Social Services  
 N.S.W. Council of Social Services  
 Local Community Services Association  
 Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Co-op  
 South Sydney Committee of the Australian Assistance Plan  
 N.S.W. Shelter Co-op Ltd.  
 Sydney University Settlement  
 Tenants' Union of N.S.W. Co-op Ltd.

## STAFF (As at September, 1984)

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Co-ordinator	Neil Stuart
Typist	Jean Currell (25 hrs per week)
Accounts Clerk	Laurel Sommer (16 hrs per week)
Cleaner	Lambrini Kakoliris

Migrant Project

Grant-in-Aid Worker	Evelyn Webb
Ethnic Affairs Worker	Mijung Paik (20 hrs per week)
C.E.P. Worker	Christine Vergos

Aboriginal Project

Senior Project Officer	Brenda Maling
Welfare Officer/Youth Worker	Vacant
Welfare Officer	Meropy Bernhard (4 days per week)
Secretary/Receptionist	Sonya Maloney

Staff Changes

On the whole there is not a lot of staff turnover, but there have been some changes.

On December 21, Miles Lalor resigned from the Aboriginal Project and has settled in Broken Hill. Loretta Fogarty filled in Miles' position from February 21 to April 25.

The Co-ordinator, Harvey Volke, resigned on December 30. Neil Stuart took up the position of Co-ordinator on March 1.

Aileen Wilson took up the receptionist's position on October 4, after several short appointments to the position and resigned on May 25. Sonya Maloney was appointed as receptionist on May 28.

Staffing of Related Projects

South Sydney Community Aid sponsors a number of projects, some short-term and some ongoing, some operating as part of South Sydney Community Aid and some virtually autonomous.

Lionel Adams-Acton was the Detached Youth Worker for South Sydney Youth Services until January 16. On February 28, Bernice Redman was appointed to that position.

From July 6, 1983 to September 9, 1983, Robyn Kennedy staffed a project investigating the feasibility of setting up a Community Tenancy Scheme.

As a result of the above feasibility study, Mary Ann Veliscek took up the position of C.T.S. Housing Officer on September 19, 1983. On July 17, SWISH, which incorporates the C.T.S., became fully autonomous.

Under the Wage Pause Programme, South Sydney Community Aid received funds to staff an Aboriginal Funeral Fund Project. Charlotte Nipps staffed the duration of the project, from November 28, 1983, to June 18, 1984.

Under the Community Employment Programme, SWISH received funds to employ an office assistant - Miriam Atalay was appointed on April 2, 1984. South Sydney Community Aid received funds to employ a clerical assistant for the Migrant Project - Christine Vergos was appointed on April 9, 1984.

### Volunteers

Ernie Ridding was sick for a time, but on recovering he has continued to do repair and handyman jobs for the agency and clients.

Kim Pavlovich and Lil James have continued the Thursday morning Coffee Shop/English Conversation group going for another year.

Other volunteers have helped out on special projects such as the South Sydney Festival.

The work put in by Directors is all voluntary and Directors contribute their special skills and knowledge on various projects and when needed.

Vivienne Abraham continues as the honorary solicitor for the Co-operative.

SERVICES AVAILABLE AT OUR PREMISES  
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\* Social Welfare Service:

Office Hours: Monday to Friday - 9.30am to 12.30pm  
1.30pm to 4.30pm

Telephone: 699-2260/699-4073/699-9391

Our staff is available to discuss with you in a friendly and informal atmosphere any of the following matters:

- Social Security
- financial problems
- accommodation
- employment
- consumer rights
- any other problem

If we cannot give you direct assistance we undertake to refer you to the right place.

\* Tenants' Advice Service:

Office Hours: Monday - 9.30am to 12.30pm

Telephone: 698-8033

Are you having trouble with Real Estate Agents or Landlords?

- unable to obtain accommodation
- difficulties getting repairs done
- invasion of privacy
- threat of eviction
- loss of bond money
- high rent increases

\* Coffee Club, English Conversation

Thursdays - 10.00am to 2.00pm

**CHARACTERISTICS**

... has continued its diverse functions and ... forced with a strict-out waiting ... a broad range of social problems from health to housing.

**[The President, Mick Ibbett, has been unable to complete his report on time for printing. He apologises for this. Copies of his report will be available separately.]**

... the problem in the South Sydney area is the constant increase ... seeking direct basic assistance (food, cash, ... which receives no specific funding for these ... large number of young single people coming ... Most of these young clients have been out ... had a job since leaving school.

... have spent a great deal of time in discussing ... the agency. The responsibilities of the ... have expanded and for contracts have not ... the staff and Board of Directors, but will be ...

... with youth unemployment, homelessness, etc. in the ... of a Youth Worker who will be employed ...

... the agency adding to work pressures and ... The agency has acquired the use of the ... the welfare role and the present working ... for the Corporation and ...

... the agency is large as this and ... have been ... and meeting the differing ... from the financial angle. The move will ... staff and ... Our appreciation to the ... and the Inner City ...

... to all the staff whose commitment is beyond challenge and ... in fighting for social change in the local area.

...  
...



SECRETARY' REPORT

This agency has continued its diverse functions and has increasingly been forced into a straight-out welfare role, due to increasing poverty, high unemployment and a broad range of social problems from health to housing.

We have continued to receive funding support from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Immigration & Ethnic Affairs, NSW Department of Youth & Community Services, the Council of the City of Sydney, NSW Wage Pause Scheme and Community Employment Programme funding.

One continuing problem in the South Sydney area is the constant increase of white Australians seeking direct basic assistance (food, cash, accommodation) from this agency, which receives no specific funding for these clients. There has also been a large number of young single people coming to the agency for assistance. Most of these young clients have been out of work for years or have never had a job since leaving school.

Staff and committees have spent a great deal of time in discussing past, present and future priorities for the agency. The responsibilities of the Aboriginal and Migrant Projects have expanded and job contracts have not yet been finalised between the staff and Board of Directors, but will be finalised very soon.

The increasing problems with youth unemployment, homelessness, etc. in the area has prompted the new job contract of a Youth Worker who will be employed under the Aboriginal Project.

The continuing overcrowding of the agency adding to work pressures and burdens will soon be resolved. The agency has acquired the use of the downstairs (hall) area for the welfare role and the present working area will be offices (a bit of privacy and quiet) for the Co-ordinator and administration functions.

With an agency as large as this and carrying out diverse functions, inevitably a lot of effort goes into preparing funding submissions, liaising with Government departments, and meeting the differing accountability requirements of those departments, particularly from the financial angle. The move will no doubt be welcomed by all - staff and clients. Our appreciation to the Rev. Harold Smart and the Inner City Parish of the Uniting Church for their co-operation and assistance.

Appreciation also to all the staff whose commitment is beyond challenge and their continuing dedication in fighting for social change in the local area.

SANDY CEISSMAN  
SECRETARY

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Like most community agencies hard-pressed for resources, particularly monetary resources, 1983/84 has seen South Sydney Community Aid take 'the great leap forward' with an unplanned and unforeseen surplus for the year of \$37,289.

Apart from the \$10,000 invested in new capital items (motor vehicle, electric typewriter, filing cabinets, industrial vacuum cleaner), the major contributions to such surplus arise from interest earned on funds received (almost double those received last year) of \$17,404, and a further \$7,500 unexpended salary costs due to the time taken to replace two key staff members.

As noted in my report last year, 'the litmus test of any agency is its ability to continue and, if possible, to expand its programmes and fine-tune its administration, yet finish up in a line-ball situation - neither in surplus nor deficit'. This South Sydney Community Aid has not been able to achieve despite the best-laid plans to:

- i) either seek alternate accommodation or refurbish our existing premises which currently preclude any programme expansion for sheer lack of physical space, and
- ii) appoint additional staff, particularly an Aboriginal Youth Worker.

This year's 'windfall' should overcome the current impasse, and the Board of Directors has resolved to proceed with both plans at the earliest possible time, ie before year end. Accordingly,

- i) an amount of \$20,000 has been allocated from this year's surplus towards refurbishment of the premises together with an additional \$5,000 from last year's surplus to provide access and facilities for the physically disabled, and
- ii) efforts are continuing to fill the vacant Aboriginal position.

And until the refurbishment is completed, South Sydney Community Aid is in a 'Catch 22' situation - it truly cannot 'purchase' much-needed human resources until it has sufficient space and facilities to accommodate them. The present situation of staff 'playing musical desks' and a waiting area filled to standing capacity is outrageous.

Again, additional human resources should enable our agency to overcome the diversion of critical human resources from existing funded programmes to the distribution of emergency relief which is provided by the Department of Social Security but without benefit of back-up administrative costs.

We have continued to receive funding support from the Federal Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, the NSW Departments of Youth and Community Services, Housing Commission and Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Council of the City of Sydney. 'Oncer' funding was attracted from the NSW Wage Pause Scheme and from the Community Employment Programme.

Once more I must express my thanks to the Management Committee and Board for their patience and support, to the administrative staff, and to Helen McCall and Ron Brown (Auditor).

MARGARET BARRY

## CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Harvey Volke was Co-ordinator till the end of December, then there was a gap of 2 months, and I occupied the position from March onwards.

### Direct Assistance Provided by the Co-operative

The various project staff have worked very effectively as a team in assisting 2,848 persons in a direct social welfare role. The figures listed toward the end of this Annual Report record the social welfare role.

Demand for direct assistance has increased over the 1982-83 period. It seems as if it will continue to increase in the 1984-85 year. Partly the increased demand reflects the increased availability of direct assistance in the form of emergency relief (food orders mainly). However, there is no doubt that it also genuinely represents a lack of improvement in the living conditions and standards of many people. Again, in the year covered by this report, the kind of direct assistance sought and provided by the co-operative tells the story. With Aboriginal and white Australian-born persons the needs are mainly for assistance with food and/or cash.

Your directors and staff accept the help this form of direct assistance provides, but also protest strongly that what we are seeing is an inadequate level of income support. If we are to truly serve the persons who come to us, then we must work vigorously for adequate income support.

About 50% of the persons helped are Aborigines, about 25% are migrants, and about 25% are white Australian-born. This break-up of persons seeking assistance partly reflects the availability of staff, but also genuinely reflects the persons most in need in our South Sydney community. Or, to put another way, it reflects those persons who are the least well off or who are experiencing problems most severely.

We can be more precise. We know that we are providing direct assistance to an increasing number of single persons, and to single parents, especially women.

We know also from our records over the years that an increasing proportion of persons assisted are persons who have been previously assisted. In other words, the need is becoming endemic. Either that, or we are encouraging persons to be increasingly dependent on us. Perhaps there is something of the latter, but I suggest we are also seeing an endemic situation. If so, then the remedy is beyond the staff, and probably beyond what our co-operative alone can do.

The assistance given by the co-operative has been with no increase in staff. Indeed, because of vacancies in a couple of positions there has effectively been a decrease in staff. This co-operative has a very competent staff. The standard

of service provided by the staff has the respect of those who benefit from it directly and from the wider community.

### Developing and Maintaining Structures Dealing with Social Needs

The other major role of the co-operative, in all its projects, is to work with groups of people in South Sydney so as to bring about a more effective, more powerful approach to social needs and an approach which will have been designed and carried through by those persons themselves.

The Aboriginal Project and the Migrant Project have each reported on their work elsewhere in this Annual Report. But again in this role, as in provision of direct assistance, the staff of the co-operative work in a team-like way. Very often, the role of the co-ordinator is simply that of an anchor-man. Sometimes the role is that of being a backstop for other project staff. Sometimes the role is one of filling in when we're really stretched.

However, in addition to the work done specifically by the Projects, there is also work undertaken by the co-operative as a whole. In this work the co-operative is usually represented by the co-ordinator. The major tasks have been:

(a) Community Tenancy Scheme/(SWISH)

Reported elsewhere in this Annual Report.

(b) Factory Conversion for Youth Accommodation

This task, to be undertaken with Wage Pause funds, was started in April, 1983 and reported on last year. However, delays in resolving ownership of the building thwarted the object of completing the project before June 1984. Funds received had to be returned, and we sought similar funding from CEP. That was knocked back and we are now seeking funding through the Housing Commission getting CEP grant. This will become part of legend.

(c) Aboriginal Funeral Fund

A Wage Pause grant was received to allow employment of Charlotte Nipps for 39 weeks to further develop an Aboriginal Funeral Fund. This worthwhile goal has been worked at on and off over many years now. I have to report the goal is still not achieved.

(d) Youth Accommodation

As part of the Youth Services Committee we have taken part in community support for housing young people in five houses available through the Emergency Accommodation Unit of the Housing Commission. It's a trial and there are problems. And it goes nowhere near meeting the range or amount of youth accommodation needed.

(e) School/Community Committee for Cleveland St. High School

This structure comprises parents, staff of the school and representatives of local organisations. It seeks to develop a mutual accountability between the school and the community, and enable each to make a significant contribution to the other.

(f) Employment/Unemployment Conference

The Board of Directors organised a conference on June 15 to bring together members of the co-operative, unemployed persons, and community workers to work on action which might be taken to create jobs, or assist persons without jobs. The workshop eventually generated a lot of ideas for creating jobs, but for most of these ideas to become reality the workshop was short on people, and especially short on people who could take the initiative. Except for a few ideas, and they are going anyway. There's a lot of potential here, but we really need to think through how best to approach it and what resources can be committed.

(g) Various Inter-Agency or Regional Structures

South Sydney Community Aid takes part in a large number of inter-agency or regional structures. The benefit of such groupings are intended to be that of providing us with resources which will enable us to better deal with social needs or to enable us, in collaboration with other groups, to direct resources to a social need. Some of these inter-agency or regional structures are reported on in the Project reports. Apart from those, the others this co-operative contributes are:

- . South Sydney Youth Services - focussing on youth work and employing a detached youth worker;
- . South Sydney Committee of the Australian Assistance Plan;
- . Neighbourhood Centres Forum. South Sydney Community Aid represents the South Sydney AAP on the Board of Directors of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development.

In the above inter-agency or regional structures this co-operative's contribution is made mainly by the co-ordinator.

Auspicing/Sponsoring Other Groups

After a long association the Tenants' Union Co-operative moved to other premises. The Tenants' Union has been an entirely autonomous organisation for a long time but we shared some resources.

Our auspicing of Community Tenancy Scheme and SWISH is reported on elsewhere.

We administer the funds of South Sydney Youth Services, an unincorporated structure.

At their request, we have agreed to administer some of the funds of the Aboriginal Dance Theatre.

Many of the inter-agency or regional structures we take part in are resourced entirely by the contributions of the groups taking part. These contributions cover the whole range of person-input, stationery, photocopying, meeting place etc. We contribute our part.

### Management of Operations

Overall day-to-day management is undertaken by the co-ordinator but it results from frequent shared decision-making by all staff. Staff meetings are held weekly. Moreover, the staff are each capable of organising their workload with minimal supervision, and do so.

The gallery of St. Lukes has served well as the premises out of which we operate. But in reality the co-operative has also utilised the ground floor of St. Lukes for a long time as part of its premises.

We work in very tight conditions on the gallery - at times almost on top of each other. And there are no physical barriers between staff, persons seeking assistance, visitors or whoever - it's a good atmosphere. But for some people getting to the gallery is difficult. So we are going to fix up the ground floor so that much of our day-to-day work will happen there. It will be better for persons coming here and for staff and still retain a good atmosphere. The financial report, elsewhere in this Annual Report, indicates the funds appropriated for this purpose.

During the year the phone system has been upgraded - we now have 3 lines, allowing for fewer delays. We have also purchased a new electronic typewriter and have replaced other office equipment such as filing cabinets.

I have come in to a co-operative whose funds have been well-managed. We have been able to so manage our revenues that at any one time we have excellent cash balances. Much of those cash balances are of course not surplus funds - they represent wages, equipment, occupancy costs, etc. which will have to be paid out. But those cash balances, managed prudently, have generated further revenue as interest. We have continued that judicious management of the co-operative's funds.

Funds received in the year from various sources are detailed in the Income/Expenditure Statement elsewhere in this Annual Report. The co-operative was able to maintain its workload with these funds, but not to expand.

In one area the co-operative was able to expand staff. A CEP grant allowed the co-operative to employ a clerical worker for the Migrant Project, which has enabled the Migrant Project and the co-operative as a whole to achieve more work output.

Conclusion

This co-operative belongs to people in South Sydney who benefit from it and who commit themselves to its broad objectives. Perhaps there is scope for both those who benefit and for those who are shareholders/members to be accounted to more frequently.

The Board of Directors does its job well. I enjoy working with the Board and with the other staff.

Neil Stuart  
CO-ORDINATOR

WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - Aboriginal Project

With substantial emergency relief monies coming into the agency in the latter part of the last twelve months, the number of clients has risen greatly. We were able to increase our food vouchers from a maximum of \$10 to a maximum of \$70 depending on family size and the number of days before further income would be received.

For the first eight months I had an average of 118 interviews per month. For the following four months, after emergency relief funds came into operation, I have had an average of 162 interviews per month. Last month I had 184 interviews in the first three weeks. These clients represent a cross-section of the community, including migrants and white Australians, but the majority have been Aboriginal.

Clients have been given an option of Food Vouchers being split between Flemings (and more recently the Black Market) for groceries and East Coast Providores for fruit and vegetables. Also, we have still been able to give out small amounts of money for fares and other needs.

Many of our clients for emergency relief have been referred from other organisations, with the majority of referrals from the Redfern Office of the Department of Social Security.

We maintain a good working relationship with the Department of Social Security as with other agencies and organisations in the area, notably Gullama and St. Vincent de Paul.

Although the majority of clients have been coming in for emergency relief, we have also been assisting in a lot of other areas, e.g. Social Security matters, accommodation, tenancy, general counselling, Housing Commission applications and follow-ups. Statutory Declarations are often requested as forms of identification for Social Security and cashing cheques. However, because of recent problems regarding misinterpretation, we have been forced to only assist with Stat. Decs. in cases where clients are known to the agency.

Monday mornings Community Aid is on the roster for the Tenants' Hotline and we are often inundated with tenancy calls. With the increase in caseload, it is often difficult to cope with all the calls coming in.

Housing and accommodation continues to be a problem in the area with local rentals exorbitant and beyond the means of those relying on Social Security incomes. There is also a continuing problem raising bond monies, especially now with the cutting down of Rent Relief resources by the Department of Youth and Community Services. We are encouraging singles to apply for Housing Commission accommodation now possible through a change of Housing Commission policy.

Our own accommodation also continues to be a problem and it is amazing how well we've all coped in our frustratingly cramped working conditions. To move around our obstacle course in the office without injury, it is definite advantage being thin. We are very much looking forward to shifting into our new offices downstairs ..... hopefully very soon.

MEROY BERNHARD



FIELD OFFICER'S REPORT - Aboriginal Project

The past twelve months have been pretty hectic for everyone at Community Aid with the various changes in staff. At present we are still down by one staff member which is making it more demanding on welfare staff.

Since the start of 1984 I have been working a 5-day week and will continue to do so.

Casework has got more and more hectic but I'm still managing to do a lot of community work. I realise a lot of people were against us accepting the Emergency Relief money from Social Security but when you are seeing clients face to face it's very difficult and frustrating to have to refer them elsewhere with no guarantee that they will get help. The end result can be that they are worse off as they usually have had to spend what little money they have on fares.

I also realise that lobbying for upgrading of benefits is in the long term the most beneficial for all concerned but the reality is it all takes time and the people need our assistance immediately.

Statutory Declarations are still very much in demand but because of a few problems we've encountered we are only issuing them to clients whom we have on file; new clients have to have some other form of identification, e.g. transport card, bank book, a letter from Social Security. We also issue them to people who are personally known by any staff member.

Our Tenants' Advice Service via the Tenants' Hotline operates on Monday mornings. Our effervescent typist cum community worker, Jean, usually handles them with Poppy and myself helping out if necessary.

Ernie is still providing us with his handyman services.

1983 South Sydney Festival was successful once again. We are presently in the process of organising Festival 84.

Housing need for singles has become a major problem. South West Inner Sydney Housing (SWISH) has been able to lighten the load somewhat. Now that the Housing Commission is providing accommodation for singles that will also ease the housing crisis.

The Redfern Office of Social Security continues to have interagency meetings whenever the need arises (e.g. policy changes, or alterations to guidelines) which have been a great help. Just reading the newsletters Social Security issues are sometimes very confusing with one misinterpreting a sentence. Therefore the meetings for me have been very beneficial.

I have been guest speaker at Youth and Community Services, Alexandria and the Aboriginal Medical Service, speaking on the service provided by Community Aid. I was also a guest speaker to the advisory committee for Council of Social Services on the needs of Aborigines.

My community involvement have been with Redfern and Inner Metropolitan Lands Council, Aboriginal Camp (Camp Wollemi, St. Albans), Housing for Aboriginal Women, Alexy's C.Y.S.S., South Sydney Women's Centre and attending various meetings involved with Aboriginal as well as overall community issues.

BRENDA MALING