Too white to be regarded as Aborigines: An historical analysis of policies for the protection of Aborigines and the assimilation of Aborigines of mixed descent, and the role of Chief Protectors of Aborigines in the formulation and implementation of those policies, in Western Australia from 1898 to 1940

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Neville believed that a policy of least intrusiveness into the lives of Aborigines was best achieved at reserves, from which non-Aborigines other than authorised persons were excluded. He made considerable progress towards Gale’s proposition that a chain of Native Cattle Stations stretching across the north was necessary to separate and protect the several language groups. By 1930, nearly nine million acres of reserves had been established from the Murchison northwards, 80 per cent of which were in the Kimberleys.\(^1\) There can be little doubt those reserves, aided by their inaccessibility, helped protect the Aboriginal cultural identity in their localities, but they did little to advance the upward mobility of the people. Quite the contrary happened. Some Aborigines maintained traditional lifestyles, but native cattle stations, commercial cattle stations and the missions reduced Kimberley Aborigines from self-reliance to subservience.

In the south of the State where reserves, especially at Carrolup and Moore River, served similar, but different purposes, the processes which Neville called ‘deterioration and demoralisation,’ were too far advanced for the Indigenous culture to be redeemed. The opportunity for establishing the Carrolup River Native Settlement was created by residents of Beverley, Katanning, Quairading, Mt Barker and other towns along the Great Southern Railway complaining about the proximity of native reserves to their towns and, more particularly, against that attendance of Aboriginal children at their state schools. Their agitation against having their children sit in the same classroom and even of having Aborigines live on reserves within or near their town boundaries compelled government first to disallow Aboriginal children from attending state schools and then to relocate their families from town reserves.

Prejudice created the opportunity and Gale rose to it. The apparent financial success of Moola Bulla encouraged him to replicate it in the South-West. His publicly stated intention was to create a large, self-sufficient reserve near Katanning: ‘providing a home for the natives and

\(^1\) The Kimberley reserves were Moola Bulla (1,119,000 acres), Violet Valley (251,460 acres), Munja (706,000 acres), Forrest River (3,120,000 acres) and Central Kimberley (1,152,000 acres). In addition there were 1,843,000 acres of mission reserves: Beagle Bay, Roman Catholic (700,000 acres), George IV Presbyterian (245,000 acres), Drysdale River, Roman Catholic (115,000 acres) and Forrest River, Anglican (99,000 acres). The total of reserves for Aborigines throughout the State amounted to 23,385,550 acres or 36,540 square miles for an estimated total population of 26,766 Aborigines.
teaching the children, which is an obligation imposed by the *Aborigines Act*\(^2\). The segregation extended public control over the lives of Aborigines.

The task of establishing the Carrolup River Native Settlement fell to Neville. It became his model for a second settlement at Moore River. This chapter will examine how the settlements were established and how Neville shaped policy by making their focus the care, education and training of half-caste children forcibly removed from their parents. The native settlements and their failed attempts to provide reasonable accommodation and care, education and training exposes inconsistency between rhetoric and practice in advancing the life-chances of half-caste children. As Chief Protector, Neville had executive responsibility for the settlements, but failed in his duty of care. That apparent flaw in his administration is incompatible with the thoroughness that otherwise characterised his managerial style. It exposes also deep-seated hostility towards Aborigines which Neville confronted in the community, public agencies, the state Parliament, and in successive governments. Their unwillingness to allocate sufficient funds for Aboriginal purposes imposed resource limits upon what Neville could achieve. In all of his initiatives, he relied upon compromise and improvisation, with a result that services for Aborigines were spread thinly and were less than adequate.

**Reserve 16370 Carrolup**

In the south of the state, Nyungars had only tenuous rights to occupy reserves gazetted for their exclusive use. They certainly could not use them for traditional ceremonial purposes or for hunting and foraging. Usually not larger than four hectares, they were too small to sustain clans or even single families for much longer than a few months, and that was regarded by many wadjella townsfolk as too long. Only the old and indigent who could harm no one stayed longer, but they lived rough. Town reserves did not enjoy reticulated water supplies, ablutions or garbage disposal. Frequently they were sited alongside town refuse dumps a sanitary distance removed from white residences. The Aborigines Department and local government authorities were reluctant to improve them and even if they agreed that water and sanitation were needed, they could not agree about who was responsible. Besides, gazetted reserves could be cancelled at any time at the decision of the Executive Government and new ones located at other places.

One such reserve was located on Lots 500/504 Katanning, together comprising about two hectares situated two kilometres east of the town’s railway station. Nyungars who made Katanning their home in between seasonal employment camped there occasionally. At most times the reserve was the permanent home of not more than 60 indigent Aborigines who lived in

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\(^2\) Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Retirement of Mr C.F. Gale from the Position of Chief Protector of Aborigines, 12\(^{th}\) October, 1915, p.5.
15 separate camps. It was a cold and bleak place in winter and in summer the Nyungars who camped there begged water from town residents. They were regarded as a nuisance and the reserve was reckoned to be too close to town. In June 1910 Corporal Purkiss of the Katanning police station recommended that a place known as Police Pools situated two-and-a-half miles from Katanning ‘would be a suitable place for a reserve’. It had a permanent water supply and residents of the town reserve could be relocated there. No action was taken. In April of the following year, Purkiss reported that approximately 70 people were camped at the town reserve. Some were employed in clearing farmland, ‘and when they have a cheque earned they come into town and are supplied with liquor and thus cause trouble with the full bloods’. Again, he emphasised that the reserve was too close to town and asked that another be found.

A convergence of circumstances caused the Katanning town reserve to become a focus of political attention and led to the establishment of the Carrolup Native Settlement. The order of events did not have discrete chronological sequence, but had an order of significance. First, townspeople objected to half-caste children attending the Katanning state school. The Aborigines Department and the Education Department responded by providing a native school.

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3 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 2922/1914, folio 7, extract from Corporal Purkiss’ report dated (Katanning) 30 June 1910.

4 *ibid*, folio 7, Extract from report of Corporal Purkiss re extra assistance at Katanning Station, 12 April 1911.
similar to one established earlier at Beverley. At much the same time, a missionary, Anna Lock, sought permission and subsequently established a school for Aborigines on the town reserve. Nyungar families were attracted to Katanning so that their children might attend school and in 1912 the resident population of the reserve grew to about 200. Hostility toward the presence of so many Nyungars in the townsite, even though Katanning was a declared area from which Aborigines were excluded after daylight and could enter during daylight hours only if they had legitimate reasons, led ratepayers and residents of the town to petition the Road Board and the state government to have all Aborigines removed to a distant reserve. Charles Gale took the opportunity of the ensuing political ferment to propose to government that water reserve 9089 be vested in the Aborigines Department and a native settlement be established there. He suggested that not only would that relieve the position at Katanning, but it would address also similar complaints in adjacent towns, ‘as native children attending school at Mt Barker and other places could be sent to the settlement’. The Scaddan Ministry prevaricated about Gale’s suggestion and acted to remove Nyungars from Katanning and establish a native settlement at Carrolup only when the Education Department threatened the closure of the native school.

The living conditions on the Aboriginal reserve and intolerance of white parents of the presence of Nyungars at the local school were not peculiar to Katanning. They were replicated at towns throughout the South-West. Neither were those issues attended to with any haste, other than to disallow Nyungar children from enrolling at government schools. The Protector of Aborigines at Beverley reported in 1911 that parents opposed the admission of Nyungar children to the state school, ‘as in nearly every case the native children are anything but clean’, and threatened to remove their children and enrol them at a Catholic school. Similarly in Mt Barker in 1914, parents kept one hundred white children away from school until Nyungar children were refused attendance. In the same year, parents at Quairading petitioned the Minister or Education in forthright terms, ‘we cannot endure their foul smelling bodies & dirty habits as an association for our own children any longer’.

The impasse at Beverley in 1911 was resolved by the Education Department, grudgingly, providing a schoolhouse and the Aborigines Department paying the teacher’s salary. A similar solution was proposed at Katanning, but there the issue was represented as an educational matter rather than as in Beverley a public health concern. In the first three months of 1912, 13

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5 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1629/19, folios 4-5, Report, CPAS to Under Secretary Colonial Secretary’s Department, 12 November 1913.
6 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folio10, Letter, Police Station, Beverley, to CPA, 21 December 1911.
7 State Records Office, Education Department, Acc 1497, Item 4259/1914, folio 19, petition to Minister for Education, 15 April 1914. See also State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914; and Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1629/1919; Peter Biskup, *Not Slaves, Not Citizens*, pp.148-54; Anna Haebich, *For Their Own Good*, pp.136-51; and Neville Green, *European Education at Oombulgurri, an Aboriginal Settlement in Western Australia*, thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Education, University of Western Australia, 1986.
Aboriginal and half-caste children had been admitted to the Katanning school. Many were aged from 10 to 14, but, because they had no previous schooling, could be taught only with the infants.\(^8\) This caused difficulties for the teachers. The Inspector General of Schools, proposed, therefore, that the Aborigines Department should establish a special school, ‘in the same way as is being done at Beverley’.\(^9\) It was agreed that Education Department would provide a disused school building and a teacher. In June 1912, the Chief Inspector of Schools advised that ‘arrangements have been made to provide separate instruction for the aboriginal and half-caste children attending the Katanning school’.\(^10\)

Anna Lock earlier had sought the assistance of the Chief Protector of Aborigines to establish a school for Aboriginal children on the Katanning reserve. A request to turn over the abandoned Aboriginal hospital on town lots 398 and 399 for a mission school was refused, and instead Miss Lock established her school on the existing reserve, lots 500/504. Her initiative, combined with the government’s native school made Katanning an attractive centre for Nyungars from adjoining localities. Families camped on the town reserve so their children could go to school.

On August 23 1912, Miss Lock wrote to Gale on behalf of the Australian Aborigines Mission seeking his assistance to secure a large area of land for an Aboriginal settlement. She estimated there were 130 natives in the southern district, ‘60 of them are children & about 70 half and quarter cast \(\text{(sic)}\)’.\(^11\) The site Miss Lock proposed was Government Reserve 9089, located about 30 kilometres west of Katanning near the confluence of the Carrolup and Carlecatup Rivers.

A local council of the Australian Aborigines Mission was established at Katanning to support Miss Locke’s proposition. They were advised, however, that there would be little encouragement to establishing a mission near any township and sought Gale’s support to have a sufficient area of good agricultural land set aside as a native reserve. They intended it should eventually become self-supporting. The success of the venture depended upon, in the first instance, securing suitable land. Gale supported their request for Government Reserve 9089. It was available and Gale recommended that, if it met the requirements, it should be ‘set apart for the welfare of the original owners of the soil’.\(^12\)

A departmental officer, Napier, inspected the Katanning town reserve in November

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\(^8\) The seven years of Primary schooling at that time were designated chronologically as infants and standards 1 to 6. In 2006 the equivalent chronological designation is Years 1 to 7. Infants would now be called Year 1.

\(^9\) State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folio 39, Cecil Andrews to Secretary, Aborigines Department, 25 April 1912.

\(^10\) ibid, folio 61, R. Hope Robertson to Acting Secretary, Aborigines Department, 5 June 1912.


\(^12\) ibid, folio 29, letter, CPA to W.J. Rae, District Surveyor, Albany, 16 January 1913.
1912. He recommended that a water tank be installed, four water closets be erected and more accommodation provided. Napier assessed the ‘native question’ in Katanning as ‘somewhat serious’ because ‘so many were located there’. He advised that Aborigines had become, ‘a perfect nuisance to the residents with their continual begging for food, clothing and water,’ but was not persuaded that the solution was to remove them to the mission proposed by Miss Lock and the Australian Aborigines Mission.\(^\text{13}\) At first he questioned whether Nyungars wanted to go there or that they would remain, but was swayed by the opportunity for education that a mission would offer; ‘It would appear that the natives are fairly well alive to the advantages of schooling for their children’. He also felt ‘quite certain’ the mission would receive ‘splendid support from the people of Katanning’.\(^\text{14}\)

The District Surveyor, W.J. Rae, rejected reserve 9089 as unsuitable for agriculture. The small area which might be fit for cultivation was ‘not suitable for any cereals but oats’. Its redeeming features were the presence of pools of permanent water and its distance from towns. Local Road Boards would not object to a mission being established there and Rae did not know of any other suitable land with permanent water in ‘a locality where there will not be any objection by local residents having the natives located near them’.\(^\text{15}\) It was not simply a matter of removing the Aboriginal presence from country towns; they had to be located where they would be out of sight and out of mind.

The matter was held in abeyance until it emerged as a political issue late in 1913. In October, the secretary of the Katanning Road Board wrote to the Under-Secretary of the Colonial Secretary’s Department to report that a deputation had waited upon the Board at its previous meeting to urge the removal of Aborigines from their camps on the town reserve to water reserve 9089, ‘some 17 or 18 miles distant from Katanning’. The request was made, he said, ‘not only in the interests of the town generally, but of the natives themselves’. The close proximity of the camps to the townsite—‘as a matter of fact it is within the townsite boundary’—had raised complaints ‘so numerous that nothing short of the removal of the camp will effect a remedy’.\(^\text{16}\)

Phil Collier, the Minister for Mines, was more forthcoming in representing the concerns of Katanning residents a month later. He too had met with a deputation when he visited the town and advised the Colonial Secretary that the Aborigines ‘constitute a nuisance and a menace to the morals of the youth of Katanning’.\(^\text{17}\) At that time between 150 and 200 Nyungars were

\(^{13}\) ibid, folio 22, memo, C. Napier to Secretary, 4 November 1912.

\(^{14}\) ibid, folio 26.

\(^{15}\) ibid, folio 43, letter, W.J. Rae, District Surveyor to CPA, 10 March 1913.

\(^{16}\) State Record Office, Aborigines and Fisheries Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folio 81, letter, J.W. Hewson, Secretary, to The Under Secretary CSO, 6 October 1913.

\(^{17}\) ibid, folio 82, memo. P. Collier, Minister for Mines to the Colonial Secretary, 7 November 1913.
camped on the reserve. Many were there so that their 50 children, 33 of them aged over eight, might attend school. Nyungar families congregated at Katanning to give their children a chance at education and Katanning ratepayers agitated for their removal. That was the catalyst for political processes that led the Scaddan Ministry eventually to establish the Carrolup Native Settlement.

The ratepayers and the council of the Road Board supported the Australian Aborigines Mission and Miss Lock in their request. One prominent resident of the town, a lawyer and solicitor, advised the Chief Protector that Aborigines camped, ‘not on the Reserve but on a piece of land within the Town Boundary close to my private residence’. His sentiments reflected a fear and loathing of the Aboriginal presence that reverberated in other submissions in favour of their removal from the town. ‘To say these people are a nuisance,’ he said, ‘is to put it very mildly’. The chief danger, it appeared, was their begging habits; ‘My wife is pestered by them for food and work every day’. The underlying hostility was different and difficult to substantiate. ‘The presence of these people so near one’s home, is highly objectionable from a sanitary point of view,’ he wrote. ‘They are dirty & appear to have neither water nor sanitary arrangements’.18

Indeed, they had neither, not even on the reserve provided for them by government, supervised by the local protector and the municipal health inspector, and serviced by the Katanning Road Board. Napier had reported that Aborigines camping at the town reserve got their water from a nearby creek into which ‘a good deal of drainage of all sorts flows’. The quality of the water for drinking purposes was ‘undoubtedly questionable’.19 While the ratepayers of Katanning might have found the presence of Aborigines ‘highly objectionable from a sanitary point of view’, the lack of sanitation and clean water in their camps and their consequent inability to wash their bodies or their skimpy clothing probably was more a threat to the health of the Nyungar themselves than to their disgruntled neighbours. However, their hygiene was used as a reason to exclude Nyungar children from the government school.

In July 1913, the local protector of Aborigines, Sergeant Buckland of the Katanning Police Station was instructed to have sanitary conveniences erected at the Katanning Reserve; ‘the cost should not exceed 40/-, exclusive of pans’. He was further instructed to move from the reserve those Aborigines who could give no satisfactory reason for being there, ‘to get them out of town and into the country’, where they might earn their own living.20 Almost a year later the secretary of the Australian Aborigines Society, Rev. Gilmour, advised that there was still no provision for water or sanitation on the reserve. In spite of promises made the previous year for

19 ibid, folio 21, memo, C, Napier to Secretary, 4 November 1912.
20 ibid, folio 21, Secretary, Department of Aborigines to Sergeant Buckland, Katanning, 2 July 1913.
water closets to be erected and a ‘tank and water to be sent down so as to keep the natives out of town’, nothing had been done. 21 Neither had residents been relocated from the town reserve. The Katanning, Kojonup and Woodanilling Roads Boards and the Lands Department had approved a native settlement on Reserve 9089, but Cabinet decided that ‘existing conditions could continue for a period’. 22

The first formal submission presented to the Colonial Secretary in September 1913 for water reserve 9089 to be given over for a native settlement and mission was rejected. The Colonial Secretary, Drew, requested another site be investigated. The issue of which department, Education or Aborigines, should be responsible for native schools had not been resolved. There was a native school at Katanning and Carrolup was too far away. Drew observed that ‘it would be too far from the school, even if it were possible to keep natives 13 miles away from their accustomed haunts’. In his opinion children should not be expected to walk more than two miles to school. Drew directed that Gale should visit Katanning to investigate ‘as soon as possible, as a deputation to me is shaping’. 23

The Education Department announced at the end of 1913 that it would no longer pay the salary of a teacher and the Katanning Native School would not reopen the following year. Gale requested that it be kept open, ‘until the school at Carrolup is available’. He then advised the Under Secretary that he faced similar problems at Beverley where families of children attending the native school camped on the reserve. He warned:

If nothing is done an epidemic of influenza or other similar diseases, to which the race is so subject, occur through the want of proper housing, the blame will deservedly rest with this department. 24

Cabinet was unmoved. The Minister for Education, Thomas Walker, continued to insist that the education of Aborigines was a duty of the Aborigines Department, not his, under provisions of the Aborigines Act. Gale agreed, as did the Colonial Secretary. Drew expressed the opinion, ‘I do not think that Aboriginal children should be allowed to attend the same schools as other children’, but he delayed making a decision about Carrolup; ‘no definite scheme has been placed before me by the C.P. of A’. 25 Cabinet also declined to act because ‘state of finances will not

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21 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folio 114, Wm. Gilmour, Baptist Manse, Katanning to CPA, 10 June 1914.
22 ibid, folio 117, CPA to Rev W. Gilmour, 29 June 1914.
23 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1629/1919, folio 93, handwritten memo, Drew to Under Secretary, 11 October 1913.
24 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folios 90-91, Memo, CPA to Under Secretary, 15 December 1913.
25 ibid, folio 96, file note, Chief Secretary to Under Secretary, 23 April 1914.
permit at this juncture’.26

Gale submitted another recommendation in April 1914, but Drew again declined to consider what he called ‘a vague, hazy proposition styled a scheme which might have run into a huge expenditure’.27 It was not until the Minister for Education’s decision of June 17 not to appoint another teacher for Aborigines at Katanning that Cabinet reversed its decision. Closure of the Katanning native school was deferred until after an alternative was available at Carrolup, but the Aborigines Department assumed financial responsibility for salaries and contingencies.28

Finally, on 21 December 1914, the Minister instructed that all natives be removed from the Katanning Reserve. Police Superintendent Pinkis advised on Christmas Day, 1914, ‘I have to report having informed all natives to proceed to Reserve No 9089 Carrolup’.29 The actual reserve consisted of some 700 acres, only about 80 acres of which were fit for cultivation. It was situated 30 km from Katanning, 20 km from Kojonup and 19 km from Woodanilling at the conjunction of those three local government areas. It also was near the conjunction of the tribal lands of the old people, the Ko:reng, Kaneang and the Wilmens.

Gale was instructed that government was to be put to no expense in removing residents from the Katanning reserve to Carrolup, ‘excepting, of course, the carting to the new Reserve such rations as are now being provided’.30 That was done, and on 23 January 1915 Gale advised the Director of Education ‘all natives have been removed from Katanning Reserve’ and that ‘nothing has yet been definitely decided on the question of establishing another school where the natives, with their children, are at present camped’.31

No further action was taken until Underwood inspected the reserve in March, decided it would make a ‘very useful’ rationing depot, approved the appointment of Mr Fryer as manager and requested that ‘Mr Fryer goes down to Katanning as early as possible, so that he may report as to the requirements for the actual commencement of the settlement’.32 The Aborigines had not been left abandoned and destitute, however. Miss Lock accompanied them from Katanning to Carrolup and generally cared for them and distributed rations on behalf of the department until the arrival of the department’s own manager. Fryer took up the position in June and his wife took over from Miss Lock as teacher. In the interim, Neville had replaced Gale as Chief Protector.

26 ibid, folio 113, file note, J.S., 23 June 1914.
27 ibid, folio 96, Under Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, 15 April 1914.
28 ibid, folio 123, CPA to the Director of Education, 3 July 1914.
30 ibid, folio 13, Deputy CPA to OIC Police Station, Katanning, 21 December 1914.
32 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1629/1919, folio 180, Hon. Minister to CPA, 29 March 1915. See also folio 173, Sydney Goss to the Secretary, 9 January 1915. Mr. and Mrs. Fryer had been in charge of the Dulhi Gunyah Mission at Victoria Park.
Neville visited Carrolup in September 1915 and recommended substantial changes. Gale had proposed that even though only 80 of the 700 acres of Reserve 9089 were fit for intense agriculture the settlement could be made self-supporting by growing vegetables and raising poultry. Neville judged that the settlement would never be self-supporting if those were its only commercial products. Katanning was quite well supplied with vegetables, poultry and eggs, and the income generated, ‘supposing we were able to sell the produce’, would not sustain the Aboriginal community. Neville rejected Gale’s proposition as unsatisfactory. It ‘would hamper the Department considerably in the future concentration of the natives on the reserve and increase the expense’. Instead, he argued for sufficient land to run 1,000 sheep.

Neville reasoned that because local Nyungars were experienced in the sheep industry they might be readily induced ‘to work in this direction than in the more intensive cultivation of land to be devoted to vegetables, etc’. He acknowledged the challenge of encouraging Aborigines to stay and work at Carrolup and of encouraging others from neighbouring localities to move there. He saw sheep farming not only as an incentive for Aborigines to work at the settlement, but also as offering the best chance of its becoming self-sustaining. Aborigines were the essential labour, but, as at Moola Bulla, they had to be free to come and go as they pleased.

The financial and administrative advantages of concentrating indigent Aborigines at one place had been demonstrated at Moola Bulla. Neville argued that, in the same way, government could save on the cost of relief by relocating indigent Aborigines from town reserves along the Great Southern Railway line to Carrolup. Relief payments amounted between £900 and £1000 annually amongst Kellerberrin, Quairading, Beverley and Gnowangerup, and Neville estimated ‘perhaps half of this amount can be saved by concentrating the natives that have been receiving relief at these places at Carrolup’. He did not, however, anticipate wholesale compulsory removal of all Aborigines.

Neville estimated that there were 14 persons at Gnowangerup, 30 at Beverley, and small numbers at Quairading and Kellerberrin who would be ‘far better at Carrolup’. At that time, the estimated population of Aborigines at those places was 70, 45, 52 and 20, respectively. Those capable of earning their own living in those localities should continue do so if that was their choice. It was within the power of the Minister to relocate those who were Aborigines under the Aborigines Act, but it was Neville’s preference ‘to induce these natives to go Carrolup of their own

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33 *ibid*, folios 181 and 182, CPA to Under Secretary, 23 September 1915.
34 *ibid*, folio 182.
35 *ibid*, folio 184, CPA to Under Secretary, 23 September 1915.
36 *ibid*, folio 185.
free will, as I feel that once they get there they may be satisfied and content to remain’. 38 Neville also was constrained by lack of administrative procedures in his department. It had statutory authority, but no regulatory mechanism. Section 12 of the Aborigines Act empowered the Minister to remove Aborigines from one reserve to another, but no regulations authorised by section 60 providing for the control of Aborigines residing on reserves had been framed or gazetted.

After his personal inspection in March 1915, the Honorary Minister for Aborigines, R. H. Underwood, signified his approval of ‘the reserve at Katanning’ which, he believed, could be developed as a ‘very useful Receiving and Maintaining Depot for aborigines serving the whole of the Great Southern District between Narrogin and Albany’. 39 Subsequently on 19 April 1916, Reserve number 16370 comprising almost 11,000 acres was vested in the Colonial Secretary as an Aboriginal Settlement.

When the Carrolup River Native Settlement was officially opened in June 1917, the Colonial Secretary, Hal Colebatch, announced that in addition to providing a home for sick, aged and infirm Aborigines, the object of the settlement was to establish a State institution for waifs and strays, ‘both aborigines and half-caste, thrown on the care of the Aborigines Department,’ and to give them an opportunity for schooling. ‘There is no intention,’ he said, ‘of allowing the children to go back to camp life, as has been suggested in certain quarters, but to train and educate them, in order to fit them to earn their living in after life’. 40

Neville’s longer-term solution to the problem of providing education at Carrolup was to relocate the native school from Beverley. He estimated that if the Aborigines from Kellerberrin, Quairading, Beverley and Gnowangerup could be induced to relocate to Carrolup, places for a further forty children at the school would be needed, ‘and be the means of educating those children that so far had no chance’. 41 This could be achieved if the school at Beverley were closed and the teacher transferred to Carrolup. Neville proposed that his Department should pay the teacher’s salary. That was approved. The native school was closed and most of the children enrolled there were transferred to Carrolup.

Reserve 16833 Moore River

When he was satisfied Carrolup was sufficiently advanced, Neville turned his attention to a second settlement, preferably somewhere in the Midland District. There were between

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38 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652 Item 1629/1919, folio 185. CPA to Chief Secretary, 23 September 1915.
39 ibid, folio 180.
41 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1629/1919, folio 185, CPA to Under Secretary, 23 September 1915.
Northampton and Gingin approximately 400 Aborigines, of whom 120 received indigent relief, and north of Geraldton and in the lower Murchison, ‘hundreds more who would come within the influence of such a settlement in respect of half-caste children, or special cases requiring attention’. Neville anticipated a need to place children in government care:

I knew that as time went on there would be increasing demands upon the Department for the care of waifs, strays and indigents and that the theory that the natives were a dying race was not in fact correct, the position being that while the full-bloods were gradually decreasing, the half-castes were rapidly increasing.

The choice of the Midland District took account of the distinctive Aboriginal groups living there. Neville identified three ‘hordes’. Aborigines living between Perth and Albany formed one horde; those from Perth northwards to the proximity of Geraldton another; and Aborigines living inland to the east of the other two comprised the third. Neville’s estimation of the boundary of tribal districts, roughly the Perth-Kalgoorlie railway line, was his demarcation of the Carrolup and Moore River catchment areas. He argued that policy must respect Aboriginal attachment to their country. From time to time it was unavoidable, he said, but his policy acknowledged that ‘it is cruel to remove a native from his own tribal district and place him in another’. Aborigines located north of the railway line might be sent to Moore River and those in the south to Carrolup.

Underwood supported Neville’s proposal for pragmatic reasons. Problems at Guildford, a suburb in the Perth metropolitan area, and Moora, 120 kms north of Perth, similar to those experienced at Beverley and Katanning were demanding political action. As early as 1905 the secretary of the West Guildford Local Board of Health had written to Prinsep advising that residents near the Success Hill Reserve complained that ‘the Blacks’ camp cause excreta and dead dogs to be deposited in the bush’. The response was to remove those who had no justifiable reason for being there; ‘the police can Act under sec 38 as far as any natives are concerned who have no reasonable excuse for being about town’. Local authorities at Guildford shunted them on from time to time. At Moora, temporary relief had been found by locating Aborigines at the Karramarra reserve. At both localities residents and local authorities agitated for the removal of

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43 State Records Office: Native Affairs, Acc 993, File 325/1930, folio 6, CPA to Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
44 ibid, folio 7, CPA to the Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
45 ibid, folio 8, CPA to Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
47 State Records Office, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Acc 255, Item 593/1906, memo, Henry Prinsep to Mr. Pechele, 12 July 1906.
Aborigines from their districts.

By March 1916 two lots, 2380 and 2440, together comprising about 5,000 acres with seven miles of Moore River frontage were identified and temporarily reserved. It was not good farming country. Only about 110 acres might be improved and cropped: 25 acres of fairly good first class land; 60 acres of medium to fair second class land that might produce medium crops; and about 50 acres of river flats which could be cropped with little fear of flooding. The Lands Department offered a negative assessment of its viability. The land was sand plain unsuited to agriculture and, in the judgement of Inspector J. Scaddan of the Lands Department, would ‘probably run a sheep to about 10 acres’, provided they were ‘continually be shifted off into better country’.

Neville was confident that, even though the property could never be an agricultural concern, a settlement there could be made self-supporting. He requested a further 1001 acres of adjoining conditional purchase land be acquired from the deceased estate of one Maitland George Brown. That property combined with the land already reserved would provide in total 300 acres of fair agricultural land and nearly 6,000 acres of sand plain on which to run sheep. The purchase was approved and when the reserve was finally proclaimed in September 1916 it comprised about 9,600 acres. Its purposes were ‘to dispose of natives who were becoming a nuisance at Moora and Guildford’, and to accommodate natives ‘under the care of the Department in districts between Northampton and Gingin’.

It was not until May 1918 that a limited number of people could be received. Nineteen arrived between 25 May and 5 June, 14 of them from Beverley. In July, five children aged from two to six years and seven adults ranging in ages from 25 to 65 years, all but one in receipt of indigent relief, were relocated from Guildford under Section 12 warrant. Residents of the Karramarra reserve followed soon after. In October 1930, 39 adults and 70 children lived at the camp: 65 adults and 169 children lived in the compound. In 1935 Royal Commissioner Moseley suggested that the camp be ‘removed to some other site immediately’. At that time the recorded total number of residents was 384.

48 State Records Office, Native affairs, Acc 993, Item 266/1927, folios 19-20, J. Scaddan to Under Secretary CSD, 14 August 1916.
49 State Records Office, Chief Secretary’s Department, Acc 993, Item 393/1927, folio 7, Under Secretary to Hon. Mr. Broun, 6 June 1922.
50 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 817/1918, folio 32, Report of Constable Geo. H. Hulme relative to Indigent Aboriginal natives removed from Lockridge natives’ camp at Guildford to Mogumber on 16 October 1918.
51 State Records Office, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Acc 993, Item 459/1933, Moore River Native Settlement – Register of Inmates.
52 Interim Report of the Royal Commissioner Appointed to Inquire into Matters in Relation to the Condition and Treatment of Aborigines, 19 April 1934, p.7.
53 ibid, p.7. For a detailed commentary on Moore River see Rosemary van den Berg, No Options No Choice! Magabala Books, Broome, 1994; and Susan Maushart, Sort of a Place Like Home, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2003.
It is uncertain how many Aborigines passed through the settlement. It may have been between 3,500 and 4,500 during Neville’s term. When he nominated Moore River Neville claimed it was ‘the ancient happy hunting ground of the aboriginal tribes of the Midland District….From time to time natives now visit the locality’.

That peripatetic tendency endured. The settlement had a fluctuating population. Some camp residents, mainly elderly indigents, stayed permanently. Adults and half-caste children sent to the settlement under warrant either absconded or remained at the Chief Protector’s pleasure, or were sent out to employment, boys when they turned 14 and girls at age 16. A large number of itinerant Aborigines also visited the settlement, notably on a seasonal basis, staying for as long as suited them, some for a day and others for months.

**Re-Opening Carrolup**

In 1920, shortly after he was appointed Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines and assumed responsibility for southern Aborigines, Fred Aldrich assessed the financial viability of Carrolup and Moore River. Their combined population numbered 280, more than half of whom were children. At Carrolup, only 250 acres of land was cleared, little more than half of which was in crop. It would be a long time before the property could generate any reasonable return and it was unlikely the settlement could be self-supporting. Moore River was worse. By June 1920, seven buildings had been erected, but no extensive fencing and little other improvement had been effected.

Aldrich judged that Carrolup had outlived its usefulness. Less than half of the residents were from the South-West and most of the indigents who had been gathered from surrounding localities had died. Carrolup was deemed an unsuitable locality for Aborigines from the dry and warmer part of the State, ‘whereas Moore River is admirably suited for all natives’. Aldrich recommended Carrolup be closed. He did so without consulting Neville or the superintendent of Carrolup, Ernest Mitchell, but, ‘in view of the urgent need for economy in every possible direction’, recommended the discontinuance of Carrolup and the transfer of its residents to Moore River.

The principal concern, once again, was to save money. Expenditure at Carrolup for the financial year 1922-23 was estimated to be £7,184. If it were to close, the cost of shifting the residents and necessary capital works at Moore River would be £6,533, ‘showing a saving of £615

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54 State Records Office, Native Affairs, Acc 993, Item266/1927, folios 48-50, CPA to Under Secretary, C.S.D., 27 March 1917.
55 State Records Office, Native affairs, Acc 993, Item 266/1927, folio 141, Deputy CPA to Acting Under Secretary, Colonial Secretary’s Department, 11 June 1920.
56 State Records Office, Chief Secretary’s Department, Acc 993, Item 393/1927, folio 5, Deputy CPA to Under Secretary, 1 June 1922.
for the first year’, and in the following year, expenditure might decrease by up to a further £1,600. The Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary’s Department, Trethowan, anticipated also that if Carrolup were made available for sale as farmland it ‘should have a value for that purpose of several thousands of pounds which would constitute a direct gain to Government’.

The Mitchell Cabinet approved the closure of Carrolup and the relocation of residents to Moore River with the specific instruction that ‘the transport of the natives be very systematically organised throughout, so that no ground may arise for any public comment’. Accordingly, Section 12 warrants were issued and on 30 June 1922 forty-six Aborigines were transported under police escort from Katanning to Mogumber. Descendants of the Ballardong, Wil:men, Kaneang, Ko:reng and Min:ang were expelled from the tribal lands of their ancestors. It was an action described by Ernest Mitchell as ‘a stupid piece of cruelty, not wanton, but the misguided action of amateurs in the name of Economy’.

Proponents of the closure of Carrolup did not share Neville’s concern for the separate placement of Aboriginal people from diverse localities belonging to different language and cultural groups. The Colonial Secretary, John Scaddan, dismissed it; ‘There are already at both Settlements natives from all over the State and no trouble on this account has resulted’. Neville rejected that proposition. He described the closure as a breach of faith:

We broke faith with the natives by depriving them of the home which they had been promised in consideration of their leaving the vicinity of various country towns and undertaking that we should educate and train their children.

When in 1926 he resumed responsibility for Aborigines across the whole state, Neville made submissions for the re-opening of Carrolup. He met with influential support as well as with predictable resistance. There was political concern about the philosophy of separate development. It was controversial and governments favoured a less hazardous laissez faire option. Electoral opportunism also was a significant factor in delaying the process. Politicians jockeyed for advantage and successive Cabinets deferred decisions that might jeopardise their government’s electoral chance. Most important, however, was the financial consideration. In the competition for diminishing government resources, especially as the economic downturn progressed toward depression, the Aborigines Department had low priority. When, in February,

57 State Records Office, Chief Secretary’s Department, Acc 993, Item 393/1927, folio 3, E. Copping, Secretary A & F to Deputy CPA, 30 May 1922.
58 *ibid*, folio 8, Under Secretary to the Hon. Mr Broun [Colonial Secretary].
59 *ibid*, folio 10, File note, Under Secretary to Deputy CPA, 10 June 1922.
60 *ibid*, folio 97 Letter, Ernest Mitchell to Mr Angwin, 16 April 1924.
61 State Records Office, Chief Secretary’s Department, Acc 993, Item 393/1927, folio 9, Colonial Secretary to the Deputy Premier (In Cabinet), 8 June 1922.
62 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 65/1929, folio 16, CPA to the Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
1929 Neville presented a formal submission for the reopening of Carrolup, ‘or alternatively, that a second Native Settlement be established somewhere in the lower South-West’, it was rejected by the Chief Secretary, Hon. John Drew, even without reference to Cabinet; ‘In view of the financial position, nothing can be done in this connection for the time being’. Drew noted for it to be brought up at the commencement of the following financial year. In the interim a general election was held and government changed hands, but there was no change in the attitude towards Carrolup. On July 15, 1930 the Cabinet of the Mitchell Ministry considered and rejected Neville’s submission.

Public opinion about Aboriginal reserves was divided. The Bunbury Diocesan Synod of the Anglican Church at its meeting on 23 September, 1930, supported the reopening of Carrolup and urged the establishment of native reserves ‘wherever 50 Aborigines or half-castes are living’. The Board of Missions regarded it as, ‘not a matter of money, but of honour’. The Chief Secretary, Norbert Keenan, did not share the Synod’s view; ‘as we have not got the money this matter must stand over’. The implication was Carrolup might be re-opened when finances allowed. In fact, there was dissension about the future of Carrolup among parliamentary members representing electorates in the Great Southern. Their lobbying and submissions from interest groups with conflicting opinions gave government convenient reasons to delay.

The Road Board Association supported the establishment of a series of reserves, including Carrolup. A deputation to the Chief Secretary, Norbert Keenan, in October 1930 argued the half-caste population was increasing at a rate which threatened, ‘in fifty years there would be tens of thousands of them with no education and no means of earning a livelihood’. The state had a duty, they said, to ensure ‘we do not have this menace of uncivilised natives growing up in our midst’. The solution sought was segregation in secure settlements.

The Mitchell Cabinet was supportive, but cautious. It sought ‘police reports on the position along the Great Southern’. A summation by Inspector Barry in December 1930 confirmed that the half-caste population was growing and that the vast proportion of them were ‘living under the same condition as the Full Blood natives’. He judged that the majority of them

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63 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 325/1930, folios 1-10, submission, Chief Protector of Aborigines to Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
64 ibid, folio 10, handwritten footnote signed W.H.K. [William Henry Kitson MLC, Honorary Minister].
66 Aborigines' Welfare, Bunbury Synod Discussion', West Australian, September 24 1930.
67 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 65/1929, folio 59, CPA to the Under Secretary, 30 September 1930. Handwritten footnote 1/10/30 NK.
68 ibid, folios 67-70, Notes of Deputation of Road Board Association to the Chief Secretary on the Establishment of Depots for Aborigines.
69 ibid, folio 68.
were in favour, ‘the married half-castes with children, who have desires for the future welfare of the youngsters’, and recommended in favour of re-opening Carrolup; ‘There is no question that Carrolup from its geographical position, and present facilities would be the place for selection’.  

Cabinet approved, but limited the expenditure for the purpose to £3,000 for twelve months at £250 a month. No longer-term commitment was intimated. The implementation of Cabinet’s decision was delayed by a campaign by landowners in the locality, the North Carlecatup Progress Association. Their action appears to have been motivated largely by self-interest and fear. Their claims were familiar. The first was depredation of stock. Mr Borstel, the secretary of the Association whose farm adjoined the settlement, wrote to the parliamentary member for Wagin, Sydney Stubbs:

I never actually caught them stealing, but my losses when they were here were rather severe—one would find sometimes a dead sheep in the back paddocks, which upon inspection contained no ribs or backbone—which sayeth much.

A second objection was that the land value of adjoining properties would be adversely affected. Another farmer with property in the vicinity of Carrolup, Mr Bennecke, even suggested that the settlers who purchased land since the mission was closed should receive compensation; ‘I would suggest cancellation of all land rents, and where the land has been made freehold reimbursed to that amount’.

A third objection raised was that the land on the reserve was unsuited to the purpose: ‘It is low lying, damp & sodden & in the winter the fog hangs around this site until late in the morning’. Finally, the threat that Aborigines might inflict grievous harm, particularly upon women, was raised. Mrs Borstel wrote to the Premier, Sir James Mitchell:

I am not a nervous person, but as a woman who came from another land to settle here and who is doing her bit to develop and populate this State, I do enter an emphatic protest, in my own name and that of all women similarly situated in this neighbourhood, against having a number of irresponsible and in some cases dangerous natives and half-castes dumped at our doors.

72 Department of Premier and Cabinet, Cabinet Record, 10 December 1930. Present: full attendance, (File, Aborigine 325/30), not published.
76 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 65/1929, folios 95-99, Mrs Ida Borstel to the Premier, 22 January 1931.
Of all these claims, only one might have been substantiated, that the land was unsuited to the purpose. The reserve comprised third-class rural land and the site of the settlement was damp, low-lying land at the confluence of two rivers. Had the land been more attractive for cultivation an earlier government would have been pressed to alienate it for agriculture, or to open it to soldier settlement.

The least sustainable objection, at that time, was that the Aborigines posed a threat to the welfare of farmers, white women in particular. The public record repudiated that Aborigines posed that sort of threat. In the financial year ending 30 June, 1932, there were 112 convictions recorded State wide for misdemeanours by Aborigines: 42 were for cattle stealing or being in unlawful possession of beef in the North; 13 for being on a prohibited area; 11 for drunkenness or receiving liquor; one for murder of a white man; and four for assaults upon other Aborigines. There were no police reports of Aborigines molesting white women, physically or sexually. Regardless of that truth, white fear of the black persisted.

In May 1931, the Minister for Health, Hon. Charles Latham, weighed in. He sought information about the number of Aborigines at several country centres. Latham advised he intended raising a strong protest against expenditure on reopening Carrolup, ‘when many of our own people are in need of accommodation, especially in respect to maternity cases’. It is assumed Latham meant by ‘our people’ those whose skin colour was similar to his own. Neville responded that there was no hospital accommodation for Aborigines outside the institutions, ‘and the case of the expectant mothers is much worse than in the case of the whites’. His minister, Keenan, supported him: ‘I do not agree with the comparisons made but all the same the conditions of the natives and half castes are deplorable’. Latham retaliated, saying, ‘I feel satisfied there are still some officers in the Service who are unaware of the present cash position of the Treasury’. It would appear that Neville had little patience with some of his political masters, and they with him. Even after having served sixteen years as Chief Protector, he still engendered political enemies.

Government continued to prevaricate. Hon. Charles Baxter, who in 1931 had replaced Keenan as Chief Secretary, believed it was inadvisable that Carrolup be re-opened, but deflected its advocates with the excuse of financial stringency; ‘the financial (sic) is too grave for me to give consideration to the establishment of a native settlement in the G. S. district, but I will be

78 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 65/1929, folio 178, Minister for Public Health to Chief Secretary, 21 May 1931.
79 ibid, folios 179-80, file note, CPA, 22 May 1931.
80 ibid, folio 80, footnote.
prepared to consider when conditions warrant’. Neville was directed to find an alternative area of virgin country that might be suitable for the purpose. Eleven sites, including Bremer Bay, Gnowangerup and Merredin, were evaluated and rejected, most vociferously by landowners who did not want a native settlement in their locality.

Advocates for the re-opening of Carrolup persisted. In October 1935 Mrs Billy Nelly, a Nyungar of Narrogin, wrote to Neville:

> I hope you will open Carrolup for Narrogin this district as Narrogin children got no sense and no schooling. All what they do to be cheeky and fighting and running about with nothing on. Some time I will tell you more but next time when I get answer from you. Don’t you tell on me as I will be your spy now until you get Carrolup it’s no use, sir, it’s better to have these native in settlement to learn their children well catered for and good scholar like my Dulcie.

It was not until 1939, near the end of Neville’s term as Commissioner for Native Affairs that 4,597 acres of land alienated after the closure in 1922 was resumed, Reserve 21907 was gazetted and the Carrolup Native Settlement was re-opened.

**Out of Harm’s Way**

In August 1915 Neville raised with the manager of Carrolup, Fryer, whether he could take charge of any orphaned half-caste children or house such children should the need arise; ‘In the future, no doubt, we will have to provide for them’. The following month after visiting towns along the Great Southern Line he reported that urgent consideration was necessary for the provision of facilities at Carrolup for the reception of ‘aboriginal and half-caste children thrown on the care of the Department from time to time’.

In 1914, Gale had put at 343 the number of ‘waifs and strays of the bush and camp life full blood and half-caste’, cared for at missions. While he was generally satisfied with what the missions did, he had reservations about its worth:

> Nomadic in their habits, and never having advanced above the stone age, it seems a hopeless task to try to christianise and bring them near our own standard of life. Those who are devoting their lives to this work are to be commended for their self-sacrifice, but those who have studied the bush native will very sensibly think

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81 *ibid*, folio 228, memo, Under Secretary to the Hon. Chief Secretary, 9 September 1932.

82 *ibid*, folio 293, letter, Mrs Billy Nelly to Mr. Neville, 20 October 1935.


84 *ibid*, folio not numbered, CPA to Chief Secretary, 23 September 1915, p.3.
that it will be a case of ‘Love’s labour lost’. 85

Those ‘waifs and strays of the bush and camp life’ appear to have been of the same genre as Neville’s ‘orphan half-caste children’ and ‘aboriginal and half-caste children thrown on the care of the department from time to time’. Few were orphans, even fewer were ‘waifs and strays’, and many were half-caste children, bastards rather than orphans, taken to missions under section 12 warrants, or sent there at the behest of their white fathers.

Neville’s concern was for the fate of such children. In September 1915 he expressed his disquiet in terms that would resonate throughout his tenure as Chief Protector:

In the various camps that I have visited during the week, there are numbers of half-caste children, some of whom are as white as any of our own children, who should be under proper care and receiving education.86

He proposed a course of action that might enable that to be done. Aboriginal and half-caste children consigned to the care of the department instead of being sent to missions should be located at Carrolup. Neville anticipated that most families could be induced to relocate from Beverley, Quairading and Kellerberrin. Those from Katanning already had been relocated, although not quite voluntarily. Neville anticipated that families who refused to relocate and whose children were not being looked after properly, would have to be forcibly removed. He expected that this would apply ‘mostly in the case of women who have lost their husbands, and have large families’.87 The justification was the apparent neglect of children, but the real mischief that Neville identified was that the children were fair-skinned and their putative fathers had abandoned them.

Neville argued that state care in self-supporting settlements was a cheaper option than the 10 pence per capita daily subsidy paid to missions. He proposed erecting at Carrolup dormitories and a dining room for thirty or forty children. They were not intended to be salubrious; ‘Such buildings can be constructed of bush timber, and there is sufficient iron on the reserve from the supply which we sent down from the old Welshpool settlement to roof the buildings’.88 As it turned out, the walls of the dormitories were faced with lime-washed canvas with an open space of 30 cm between the roof and the top of the walls all around the building.89 They may have been drier than humpies on town reserves, but not warmer during cold, wet winters.

85 Aborigines Department, Annual Report for the Financial Year Ending 30 June 1914, p.8.
86 ibid, folio not numbered, CPA to Chief Secretary, 23 September 1915, p.4.
87 ibid, folio not numbered CPA to Chief Secretary, 23 September 1915, p.5.
88 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1271/1915, folio not numbered, CPA to Chief Secretary, 23 September 1915, p.4.
89 ibid, folio not numbered, CPA to W. J. Fryer, 7 October 1915.
Neville’s early expectation was that relocating half-caste children from towns along the Great Southern Line to Carrolup would be ‘the means of educating those children that so far have had no chance’. Indeed, the education of half-caste children was the essential catalyst for the Scaddan Ministry’s eventual approval of the Carrolup River Native Settlement. Gale had argued in his Annual report for 1914 that education was an obligation imposed upon his department by the *Aborigines Act*. ‘It would not be unreasonable to argue,’ he said, ‘that an educational system for aboriginal children’ should be debited against the £10,000 hypothecated revenue. Gale did not evince optimism of the outcome. He was aware that there were many who considered money spent on the education of Aborigines as wasted, ‘because there are so few shining examples to the outcome’. He was convinced, however, that the state’s failure to make adequate provision pointed more to ‘our system being wrong than that the intellectual capacity of the race is wanting’.

Neville supported Gale’s view that there should be a separate system of Aboriginal schools, but for different reasons. He argued that Aborigines could not achieve to optimum levels in mainstream schools. He elaborated upon that position in his evidence to the Moseley Royal Commission. Aboriginal children, he said, displayed a different psychology from that of a white child; ‘His inferiority complex is too self-evident and he suffers in consequence’. He was persuaded of the need for native schools, preferably on native settlements.

One of the justifications for establishing Carrolup had been the strong objection to Aboriginal children attending school with white children. Under Education Regulations gazetted in February 1907, teachers could temporarily suspend from attendance any child suffering from any contagious or infectious disease, ‘or who is habitually of unclean habits’. Many Aboriginal children were ‘habitually unclean’, not by choice, but because the circumstances of their lives made cleanliness difficult. Afflictions such as scabies, ringworm, head and body lice, diarrhoea and gastro-enteritis, conjunctivitis and blepharitis, and respiratory infection were endemic amongst the children. Each of these conditions was reason under Regulation 27 for a child to be ‘sent home at once’. Consequently, even if Aboriginal parents wanted their children to attend school, many spent extended periods under suspension on general grounds that they were ‘habitually unclean’. Education regulations and white prejudice combined to deny Aboriginal children an opportunity for primary schooling.

After the *Education Act* was revised in 1928, Regulation 85 still allowed that Aboriginal

90 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 1629/1919, folio 185, memo, CPA to Under Secretary C.S.D., 23 September 1915. See p. 186 above.
92 Moseley Royal Commission, Evidence of A.O. Neville, 12 March 1934, p.15.
93 Supplement to Government Gazette, Friday, February 8 1907, *Regulations, Education Department*, Regulation 112.
children could be excluded from state schools if white parents objected. In June 1933, the Parents and Citizens’ Association objected to 14 half-caste children attending Wagin School. The head teacher at the school advised that, ‘in some cases he found the half cast (sic) children kept in a cleaner condition than the white children’, but the Chief Inspector of Schools instructed him to take the half-caste children off his books.94 Two Aboriginal parents, Elijah Jones and F. Bolton, both of whom claimed their wives had more than half white blood, appealed.95 Children of three other half-caste families were not excluded.

Premier Collier interceded and all the children were re-admitted. It is probable that the Jones and Bolton children were not Aborigines, even though their fathers may have been deemed Aborigines for the purposes of the Aborigines Act. If the children were not Aborigines at law, regardless of any physical attributes that might have given reason for others to categorise them as such, Education Regulation 85 did not apply to them. It applied only to ‘Aborigines’ and ‘half-castes’, both of which terms were defined in the Aborigines Act.

A question arose also whether exemption from the Aborigines Act extended to the children of an exempted half-caste and if so, whether such children of school age were compelled to attend school.96 An earlier opinion by the Solicitor General held that exemption applied only to the named person, and only for the purposes of the Act. In this instance Neville advised that even though the wife and children of an exempted person were not included in the Certificate of Exemption they sometimes were exempted in addition; ‘It is assumed the privileges extend to the wife and family so long as the children are under 16 years of age’. By extension of that proposition, the children were caught by the provisions of the Education Act:

The children of the exempted person would not be dealt with by the Aborigines Department in the matter of schooling, and therefore might naturally be expected to enjoy the usual educational facilities accorded by the state in the case of white children.97

Not all children of exempt Aborigines enjoyed that privilege. Prejudice within particular school communities, officially sanctioned by Education Regulation 85, denied them the opportunity.

The dispute as to whether the Education or the Aborigines Department was responsible for the schooling of Aborigines initially related to sections 4 and 5 of the Aborigines Act 1905. Section 4 established the Aborigines Department and charged it with responsibility for, among

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94 State Records Office, Native Affairs, Acc 993 231/1933, folio 1, Protector at Wagin to CPA, 3 May 1933; and folio 7, Chief Inspector of schools to CPA, 16 June 1933.
95 ibid, folio 15, Watts and Gee, Barristers and Solicitors to Director of Education, undated (Original on Education No. 1019/16).
96 ibid, folio 42 and 43, Albert P. Davis to CPA, 22 September 1933.
97 Ibid, folio 43, CPA to Dr A.P. Davis, 26 September 1933.
other things, ‘the education of aboriginal children’. Section 5 hypothecated a sum of £10,000 for the purposes of the department. Because the latter provision substituted for the repealed financial obligation to the Aborigines Protection Board under section 70 of The Constitution Act 1889, the responsibility given to the Aborigines Department for ‘the education of aboriginal children’ was interpreted by some as a constitutional responsibility which took precedence over any general responsibility for the education of children under other legislation. That is unlikely since the hypothecation of £10,000 under s. 5 of the Aborigines Act 1905 was a substitution for the sum of £5,000 hypothecated under s. 70 of the Constitution Act 1898. That section of the constitution was abolished by s. 65 of the Aborigines Act 1905. Any further constitutional obligation attaching to constitution section 70 ceased. The real question was the extent of the obligation for the education of Aboriginal children imposed upon the Aborigines Department. The Education Department had a general responsibility for the education of children and that was not necessarily cancelled by the responsibilities imposed by sections 4 and 5 of the Aborigines Act 1905.

Pressure was applied for the Aborigines Department to establish separate native schools. The issue was conceded at Beverley and Katanning, as discussed above. To extend the provision of native schools to all townships with a sufficient number of Nyungar children of school age would have been prohibitive for the strained financial capacity of the Aborigines Department. The Colonial Secretary, Drew had ventured the opinion in 1912 that the Aborigines Department should undertake the education of Aboriginal children, ‘in view of the fact that the Hon Minister for Education will not consent to do so’.98 He was advised that there were 13 towns where schools might be necessary and that the approximate annual cost of maintaining each ‘would be £400 in the first year’.99 The question of whether to proceed was one of policy. The Scaddan Ministry avoided confronting it, as did every succeeding ministry until 1940.100

It was impossible for the Aborigines Department to respond to the educational needs of Aboriginal children without a substantial increase in its annual financial allocation. That was not forthcoming. Any obligation which might have attached to the Education Department to make special provision for Aboriginal children was contested. Intra-governmental finance, rather than educational considerations, it would appear, dictated whether and where Aboriginal half-caste children might attend school. In the words of the Under-Secretary of the Colonial Secretary’s

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99 ibid, folio 60, Acting Under secretary to Hon. Col. Secretary, 6 June 1912.
100 In 1942 the Education Department accepted some responsibility and provided a teacher and teaching resources for the school at Moore River.
Department, ‘The matter appears to be one of finance’. Resolving that financial problem by resort to the *Aborigines Act* and shifting responsibility away the Education portfolio to Aborigines exposed the more vexing question of who was an Aborigine.

The question of which children were not Aborigines and therefore entitled to the same educational privileges as white children had arisen in 1916 at Quairading where John Kickett, a half-caste, wrote to the Minister for Education, Hal Colebatch asking if his children could attend the state school:

> Some time ago there was a few of them native children going and some were not Clean so the School Board put a stop to them. On my part, I have taken up 300 acres of land am living on Same. At Present my Children Have not Been to school yet….My Children wants to learn Something. I have been to School myself. This is my own handwriting am pleased to write to you. Probbley this is the only letter you ever got from a Half-Cast.

Parents of 25 of the 44 children attending the school did not oppose the attendance of the Kickett children. Neither did the school principal, Mr Courtney. He advised that one Aboriginal family attended the school, but they were ‘extremely clean and well-behaved’. Courtney recommended that the Kickett children be permitted to enrol on condition that ‘they be the same’. He cautioned that there would ‘not be room with the present enrolment’ for other Aboriginal families.

The Director General of Education was not inclined to approve the children’s enrolment. He referred the matter to Neville who, in turn, recommended approval for the Kickett children; ‘surely if the parents of the white children raise no objection, then the Education Department might refrain from doing so’. Neville identified two issues. The first was that children excluded might not be Aborigines for the purposes of the Act. A few months previously the Education Department had attempted to exclude quarter-caste children from Mullewa School. Quarter-castes specifically were excluded from the provisions of the *Aborigines Act* and were entitled to be treated as whites.

At Quairading, however, the action to exclude half-caste children, including the Kickett children, was determined to be legitimate under Education Department regulations and was beyond Neville’s jurisdiction. All that Neville could offer was for Mr Kickett to send his children

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101 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folio 96, Under Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, 15 April 1914.
102 State Records Office, Education Department, Acc 1497, Item 4259/1914, folio 61, John Kickett to Mr. Colebatch, 11 September 1916. Errors of grammar, spelling and syntax are as transcribed from the original letter.
103 *ibid*, folio 71, letter, H.C. Courtney to Director of Education, 22 September 1917.
104 *ibid*, folio 73, CPA to Under Secretary, 5 October 1917.
to the Carrolup Native settlement ‘for the small sum of 4/- each per week’.\(^\text{105}\) He proposed that the Education Department’s policy would ‘gradually but surely’ exclude all half-castes from state schools ‘wherever an opportunity arises’. That imposed pressure upon his Department to establish native schools; ‘sooner or later we shall have to spend money in educating the children excluded’.\(^\text{106}\) It was financially impractical to establish a native school wherever Aboriginal children were excluded. The solution, in Neville’s opinion, lay in ‘the system of establishing State settlements’.\(^\text{107}\)

Neville’s second concern raised by the Kickett case was the assumption that Aborigines had limited intellectual capacity. When the question of Aboriginal children attending Katanning School was raised in 1911 it was contended, among other things, that because they were ineducable they were not the Education Department’s responsibility. Neville raised the question in relation to the exclusion of the Kickett children. He did not know whether ‘these half-caste children are not supposed to have the same standard of intelligence as the white children’. Nor did he know if that issue had anything to do with their exclusion. If the concern was that these half-caste children might lower the educational standard of the school generally their exclusion was, in Neville’s opinion, discriminatory.\(^\text{108}\)

Reputable opinion held that Aborigines were intellectually inferior to whites. As psychometric testing gained in respectability the opinion of cognitive and social psychologists assumed credibility, but they could not agree whether Aborigines in general had limited intellectual capacity.\(^\text{109}\) Popular opinion, however, was that the intelligence of Aborigines did not develop beyond that of a child of twelve to fourteen years of age, and that they were capable of mastering only basic literacy and numeracy. Evidence given by a former State Psychologist, Dr Ethel Stoneman, to the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 reaffirmed that opinion. Dr Stoneman characterised the educability of Aborigines at three levels. On the basis of intelligence tests she applied to children at Moore River, she calculated that 31 per cent, about one third of those tested, could achieve at the same levels as white children. Forty-seven percent were educable up to the standard of dull whites, and the rest ‘are educable only as feeble minded individuals’.\(^\text{110}\)

That translated into a general expectation that Aborigines could be educated to standard

\(^{105}\) ibid, folio 64, memo, CPA to Under Secretary C.S.D., 4 October 1916.

\(^{106}\) ibid, folio 73.

\(^{107}\) ibid, folio 64.

\(^{108}\) ibid, folio 73, CPA to under Secretary, 5 October 1917.


\(^{110}\) Moseley Royal Commission, Evidence of Ethel Turner Stoneman, M.A. Stanford University, California, M.A. University of Western Australia, Ph D. Medicine, Edinburgh, 23 March 1934, pp.386-7.
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Dr Stoneman recommended that half their school hours should be dedicated to practical courses in elementary sanitation, motherhood and child care, elementary cooking, sewing, the use of tools, tree planting and the care of trees, elementary weaving and net making. She may have drawn, as she claimed, on her studies in California in describing such a curriculum, but she might equally have been describing the curriculum of the school at Moore River. There, the emphasis was on basic literacy and numeracy and practical training to fit girls for domestic service and boys for farm work. The value of that training, especially for boys, appears to have been minimal. Girls who showed promise at Moore River were transferred to the East Perth home for intensive training before they were sent out to employment.

As in other aspects of public policy for Aborigines, a powerful self-fulfilling prophecy operated. Expectations and resource inputs were low and educational outcomes matched the expectations. The District Inspector reported on the Katanning Native School in 1914 observed that the children did not achieve well in English and Arithmetic; ‘the natural disinclination of the native child to put forth continuous mental effort has not been overcome’.

In ensuing decades little changed in the attitudes of education professionals. The aims recommended for children at the Moore River Native settlement in 1940 included a working knowledge of English, the monetary system and weights and measures, habits of personal hygiene, developing ‘correct attitudes in regard to themselves and their neighbours’, and ‘in general to make them better natives not…imitations of the whites’.

The Acting Commissioner for Native Affairs, Frank Bray responded to criticism of the school, ‘despite our disabilities we have achieved something’. Indeed, they had. At that time, more than three quarters of Aboriginal children had no formal education whatsoever. In 1939, 199 children were enrolled in schools at Moore River and the Moola Bulla Cattle Station, 383 at nine mission schools, but only 364 were enrolled at 83 state schools. Those numbers were an improvement on enrolments three years previously. In August 1936 only 793 Aboriginal children, approximately 20 per cent of the cohort aged twelve years or under, attended school. There were only 47 schools throughout the state to which Aboriginal, including half-caste children were

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111 Primary schools in Western Australia at that time were had seven age-related levels: Infants (for children entering school at the beginning of the year in which they turned six) and Standards One to Six. These are equivalent to current Years One to Seven. Children in Standard Four were aged about ten.

112 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 753/1914, folio 133, Katanning Native School; Report by District Inspector, 14 October 1914.

113 State Records Office, Native Affairs, Acc 993, Item 452/1940, folio 22, C.W. Radbourn, Inspector of Schools to Director of Education, 26 July, 1940.

114 ibid, folio 24, Acting CNA to Acting Director General Education, 12 August 1940.

115 State Records Office, Native Affairs, Acc 993, Item 231/1933, folios 105 and 120. 145 children were enrolled at Moore River, 54 at Moola Bulla, 68 at Beagle Bay Mission, 66 at New Norcia, and 59 at Mount Margaret Mission. The largest number enrolled at a state schools were 32 at Queen’s Park (children from Sister Kate’s), 19 at Port Hedland, 15 at Moora and 14 at Geraldton. Other State School enrolments ranged from one to 11, but few had more than 5 Aboriginal students.
admitted, two were at Moore River and Moola Bulla and nine were mission schools. Exclusion on grounds of race was discriminatory not only between Aborigines and whites, but also among members of the Aboriginal community.

The persistent attempts by Aboriginal parents to have their children attend school exposed a generic falsehood that Aborigines, of whatever mixture of racial heritage, had low aspirations for their children. For Aborigines, as for others, their willingness to locate where their children might have best access to appropriate schooling signifies commitment to their aspirations. Not all members of the white community shared their commitment. They disliked equally the presence of large numbers of Aborigines, half-caste or otherwise, in their towns. Many probably would have agreed with Phil Collier that ‘they constitute a nuisance, and their presence is a menace to the morals of the youth’. It would appear there was concern among some residents that immorality, like ringworm and conjunctivitis, was infectious. In the face of such attitudes, Neville’s aspiration that educated half-castes might be elevated in public estimation and social acceptability must appear to have been futile.

Discussion

The political motivation for government approval of the Carrolup River and Moore River Native Settlements was to appease community hostility towards Aboriginal people congregating at reserves in rural towns in the Great Southern and Midland districts. Removing Aborigines from those reserves and concentrating them at the settlements was politically attractive also because it promised cost saving in food and clothing relief. The settlements afforded greater public control over the lives of Aborigines, not for their protection, but for protection against their imagined moral and physical threats to the white community.

It is difficult to make judgements about the effectiveness of Carrolup Native Reserve in achieving Neville’s aspiration that it might offer opportunities for educating and training half-caste children. It operated for less than seven years before it was closed and its residents transferred to Moore River. It certainly did not resolve agitation by the Katanning community against the presence of Aborigines in their town. Even though they had been directed to leave the town reserve, Nyungars continued to camp there and townspeople continued to complain. In response to their protests and political representations on their behalf, on 23 April 1915 Executive Council cancelled the Aboriginal Reserve No. 9622 and changed its use to Public
Utility. Neville subsequently advised the Officer in Charge of the Katanning Police Station that 'you now have the power to order any aboriginal found loitering in the Katanning townsit forthwith to leave such town'.

That had little effect. Nyungars continued to assemble at Katanning and since there was no reserve, they camped wherever there was a convenient water supply. In February 1922, Aldrich advised, ‘there are always a few natives camping in Katanning’. In some instances they were en-route to Carrolup, but the townspeople still regarded them as a nuisance. Aldrich recommended the establishment of a new reserve for Katanning. When Carrolup was closed in June 1922, Aldrich requested of the Commissioner of Police that his local officers ensure ‘that any natives making for Katanning are not allowed to hang about town’.

Again, Nyungars were not deterred. In October 1922 a Katanning resident wrote to the Secretary of the Katanning Road Board appealing for ‘an abatement of the Nigger nuisance about my home’, and threatened to send copy of his letter to the press. The letter was passed on to the local protector, Sergeant Purkiss of the Katanning Police Station, and eventually noted by the Commissioner of Police. He in turn requested that Aldrich arrange ‘for a small reserve on which aboriginals could camp, in this district’. The matter was expedited and a new reserve was gazetted. When Neville visited the Katanning reserve in 1930 he found ‘old Bob Egil and his wife the only occupants’. Other families were camped on private property and at the Showground. Neville observed, ‘conditions generally in Katanning are not good’.

Carrolup did not resolve racial intolerance in southern communities and it did not endure long enough to demonstrate it might have achieved other purposes. The Moore River Settlement did endure and it proved a human tragedy. It did little to advance the life opportunities of young people sent there under warrant so that they might be out of harms way. Many Aborigines avoided living there permanently, but those who did suffered impoverishment, humiliation and degradation. When he reported on the settlement, Royal Commissioner Moseley was scathing in his criticism; ‘it forms, in my view, a woeful spectacle’.

Moseley’s observation after spending some nine hours there and seeing everything appropriate to his purpose that ‘my firm impression is that the settlement leaves very much to be

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118 State Records Office, Aborigines and Fisheries, Acc 652, Item 2922/1914, folio not numbered, CPA to OIC, Police Station, Katanning, 28 April 1915.
119 State Records Office, Native Affairs, Acc 993, Item 341/1928, folio 95, DCNA to Under Secretary for Lands, 17 February 1922.
120 ibid, folio 99, Secretary, Department of Aborigines and Fisheries to Commissioner of Police, 27 June 1922.
121 ibid, folio 105, T.A. Carr to Secretary, Katanning Road Board, 30 October 1922.
122 ibid, folio 107, Commissioner of Police to DCNA, (original on Police File 7891/20), 14 November 1922.
123 ibid, folio 177, file note, CPA, 24 March 1930.
desired’ was masterful understatement. He recorded that the dormitories presented a dilapidated appearance, were far too crowded, and ‘are vermin ridden to an extent which I suspect makes eradication impossible’.

The school was inadequate and the hospital, although a substantial building, needed two additional wards; ‘There is no isolation ward and the one bath room is used as a surgery.’ Apart from the sewing room where girls made clothing, there was no vocational training because no equipment was provided. There was much room for improving the food; ‘Powdered milk for children is obviously useless, but 56 cases are consumed in a month.’

Moseley was excoriating in his criticism of the punishment inflicted upon inmates of the compound. The ‘boob’ at Moore River was infamous. It was a small, detached, poorly ventilated, galvanized corrugated iron box with a sand floor, almost dark when closed, in which inmates were incarcerated for as long as fourteen days; ‘barbarous treatment and the place should be pulled down’. Moseley’s criticism of the camp, however, was not for its disgusting condition, but rather for the threat it posed to children in the compound, ‘a menace to the settlement’:

The inmates of the Compound are admitted for protection and education, and I found them living within a few yards of a collection of useless, loafing natives, content to do nothing and always ready to entice the compound girls to the camp.

Moseley’s condemnation of the Moore River Settlement is remarkable not least for its inclination to find fault in the Aborigines for the appalling condition of their lives.

Neville’s part as the senior accountable officer responsible for the native settlements, as well as the general care of Aborigines, is perplexing. He challenged the fatalism attaching to the proposition that Aborigines were remnants of a race in terminal decline. His initiatives for schools at Carrolup and Moore River intimated an awareness of education as an investment in their future, particularly the future of half-caste children. He confronted deep-seated hostility and refusal of government agencies, such as education and health, to provide services for Aborigines, and sought to provide them within the constrained resources of his department. He appeared to take the side of the angels, and yet he exercised administrative oversight of Moore River, as well as reserves in other parts of the South-West, and could not have been ignorant of the evident deterioration of the circumstances under which Aborigines were compelled to live. Little effort was made to provide adequate housing and efforts to provide regular health and educational services were pitifully inadequate.

125 ibid, p.3.
126 ibid, p.5.
127 ibid, p.6.
128 ibid, p.6.
129 ibid, p.7.
In his public utterances Neville seemed to turn his back on convention. He acknowledged that half-castes were Aborigines not merely in law, but also in fact, and that their number was increasing. He repeated his denial that Aborigines were a dying race in several forums. In his initial submission of 9 February, 1929 for the re-opening of Carrolup, Neville made clear that of the then nearly three thousand half-castes in the State, many were in the third generation; ‘These are marrying amongst themselves and are usually most fecund’. The strict Indigenous marriage laws preventing consanguinity had broken down, with the result, Neville opined, children were ‘weedy and mentally deficient’. That observation might not have been defensible, but Neville recognised that, while the number of full bloods was diminishing, the Aboriginal population was growing. In September 1930 he advised the Chief Secretary that ‘the members of family groups having the same surname is now increasing to such an extent that tribes are practically being re-formed’. The growing number of half-castes could not be attributed to miscegenation.

He reiterated that opinion in his evidence before Royal Commissioner Moseley. He argued that the 1905 Act was guided by conditions that obtained then, but were no longer so; ‘For instance, in those days it was presumed that the natives represented a people rapidly dying out. On the contrary it is now known that the natives are on the increase’. Even the birth rate of full blood Aborigines was showing signs of recovery. With respect to the Aboriginal half-castes, Neville observed, ‘Today there are still aborigines and half-castes but there are two or three generations of half-castes, and numerous cross-breeds, making a total coloured population which is not purely aboriginal 3891’. The breeding of half-castes to the second and third generation indicated the strong tendency for these people to take partners and reproduce within their own group.

Neville looked upon mainstream society as a contaminating influence preventing the social progress of Aborigines, full blood and half-castes. This meant not only the need to segregate Aborigines from the white population, but also, if the half-caste or ‘coloured’ population were to advance toward white values and lifestyles, that they be quarantined from the Indigenous tradition. Half-castes, and in particular half-caste children, must be kept separate from both the white and the black. They must also be given the opportunity of education that had been denied them in Government schools since 1912, and which Neville saw as essential to their financial independence and their social and societal acceptability. He feared that if the half-caste population were to continue to grow, as it inevitably must unless checked by some biological cataclysm, and if that population were to continue as before an uneducated outcast

130 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 325/30, folio 8, CPA to Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
131 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 65/29, folio 59, memo, A.O. Neville to Under Secretary, 30 September 1930.
132 Moseley Royal Commission, Transcript of Evidence, A.O. Neville, 13 March 1934, p.52.
minority, then the result would be a dysfunctional, alienated subgroup living beyond, and possibly hostile to, the norms of the mainstream society. The alternative was to educate them so they could be functional Aboriginal participants in the mainstream.

That was the option Neville attempted to address. He argued for integration through segregation: ‘It is right that we should give those elders that still remain a home to die in, and the youngsters that are to grow up into men and women a chance to go out into life and fend for themselves in the future years’. Segregating the older Aborigines, or those who preferred their traditional heritage, might serve to allow the race either to move toward extinction without white interference, or to advance toward European culture at their own pace and of their own choosing. For Aboriginal youths, especially the half-caste youths, segregation from both white and black might enable their advancement without the distraction of traditional culture.

Neville attempted to implement those principles at Carrolup and Moore River. In his long-term plan, they would be achieved most effectively in institutions where coloured children did not compete with their white peers. Carrolup was closed without his knowledge, and, in Neville’s opinion, before it was allowed an opportunity to succeed. At Moore River failure was conspicuous.

The Moore River experience was an instance of the dissonance that frequently occurs between intention and reality in public policy. For the decisive majority of politicians and public alike, the native settlements were seen as useful only because for minimal cost they kept troublesome Aborigines out of sight and out of mind. There were never sufficient public resources allocated to them throughout Neville’s 26-year tenure. Successive government made no special financial provisions for capital works, education, health services or general recurrent services that Neville regarded as essential to the advancement of half-caste children at Moore River. The conditions of financial stringency under which the settlement was compelled to function rendered the advancement of the half-caste children detained there a remote possibility.

134 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 993, Item 325/30, folio 10, submission, A.O. Neville to the Under Secretary, 9 February 1929.
Kitty was the only child of Dolly Bidgiemia. Her father was Charlie Mortimer, a half-caste who had been raised, educated and trained as a blacksmith by the Benedictine monks at New Norcia. Bishop Salvado recommended him to John Fitzpatrick who, since 1877 had farmed ‘Baramba’ at Gingin, a selection of 500 acres from Robert Brockman’s former Cowalla pastoral lease.\(^1\) Mortimer, at the age of 22, travelled to the Gascoyne District with Fitzpatrick when he took up Dairy Creek Station in 1885.\(^2\) Dolly was then about 15. She had been born on Bidgiemia Station and as a young girl worked on Dairy Creek, Dalgety Downs and Glenburgh, all owned and managed by members of the Fitzpatrick family. She gave birth to Kitty, it would appear, some ten or more years after Mortimer arrived at Dairy Creek.

Charlie was not Dollie’s husband. Her ‘old man’ as she called him was Tommy.\(^3\) June Jackson, the missionary supervisor of Ingada Frail Aged Hostel at Carnarvon where Dolly, purportedly aged 121, died in 1991, told Bryan Clark:

> That part of her life is a little confusing. She told me she used to go riding with the fellows, out mustering. It wasn’t the right thing to do, she said, to go riding with the boys, but Mrs (Elizabeth) Collins turned a blind eye.\(^4\)

Kitty, it would appear, might have been conceived when Mortimer and Dolly were mustering on Glenburgh or Dairy Creek Station. The year of her birth is not certain. Lois Tilbrook recorded it as approximately 1885.\(^5\) Bryan Clark says she died about 1970 aged 73 years, which would mean she was born about 1897.\(^6\) Little is recorded about her childhood. She first came to Neville’s attention in 1923 when a Mr G.A. Barratt of Dalgety Downs Station wrote to him about what Neville called, ‘an extraordinary state of affairs’.\(^7\) Barratt’s letter was on behalf of a Mr F. Hedlen,

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\(^4\) *ibid*, p.2. Elizabeth (‘Lizzy’) Collins was John Fitzpatrick’s eldest daughter, Merton Fitzpatrick’s eldest sister, who in 1889 married Charles Collins, the owner and manager of Glenburgh Station.
\(^6\) Bryan Clark, *Yammatji*, p.2.
\(^7\) State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 653, Item 342/1925, folio 4, CPA to Officer in Charge, Police Station, Gascoyne Junction, 16 November 1923.
Kitty

The station owner, a person named Merton Fitzpatrick has had four children by her, and the girl is roughly between 18 & 19 years of age at the time of writing so you can draw your own conclusions as to the nature of the man with whom we have to deal. Now after being definitely arranged that they should be married, he working for the station received orders he should go into the next station to bring in a herd of sheep and the next station Dairy Creek, being a day’s ride away.

The station owner being away was sent information as to the state of affairs existing between Hedlen and the girl. He on hearing that he was away came by car & abducted this woman and drove to Carnarvon.

It appears that they had the intention of going to Perth by boat & he forcing her to go with him met a difficulty of an Officer of the law staying him.\(^8\)

The girl who had consented to marry Hedlen was Kitty, Dolly Bidgiemia’s daughter. Dolly did not want Kitty to marry Hedlen. She telegraphed Constable Slater at the Gascoyne Junction police station, ‘Understand my daughter Kitty has consented to marry Frank Hedlen. Please protect her against this detractor for her sake and mine’.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) _ibid_, folios 1 and 2.

An extraordinary state of affairs indeed, but Merton Fitzpatrick appears to have been an extraordinary man. He was the youngest son of John Fitzpatrick. Together with his brother James, he had established Dalgety Downs on land excised from the original Dairy Creek. At the time of this alleged incident he was a Justice of the Peace, Patron of the Landor Race Club and a member of the Roads Board. He was not quite the sort of man whom Barratt intimated he might be, although his son told that he had a penchant for rum. The Inspector of Aborigines, Ernest Mitchell, described him as ‘liked as a good neighbour and a generous man…more weak than vicious’.

According to Hedlen’s complaint, as related in Barratt’s letter, Hedlen had been advised by police constable Slater at Gascoyne Junction there was no impediment to his marrying Kitty and that Fitzpatrick being a magistrate could perform the ceremony at Dalgety Downs. Fitzpatrick refused on the grounds that two J.P.’s were required to officiate.

About a half an hour later he left them & went into Mulawa (sic) by car & left orders that if he was to take the girl away he was (the Manager) to ring the police & inform them he was taking the woman out of the district, what was the man to do? Then to cap all he was ordered off the station & to leave the woman behind because she was signed on for 12 months.

Is there such a law permitting a single native woman to be signed on since she bore Fitzpatrick the first child?

Barratt advised that his letter had been written, ‘at the dictation of Mr Hedlen in the presence of the intended wife whom I have cross questioned & also the man & the facts are stated from both sides’. Neville called for a full report on the matter. His records indicted that Fitzpatrick held a general permit to employ natives for the previous year, but had not applied for renewal.

Constable Slater reported to Neville that Hedlen was deemed to be Aboriginal, was not of good character and ‘does not remain in any job long’. Hedlen had called upon Slater, the Protector of Aborigines for the district, on or about 15 October 1923 and told him he wanted to marry a native woman named Kitty from Dalgety Downs. Slater had advised Hedlen that if he were to marry Kitty he would not be able to take her away from the district, ‘as on two other occasions Hedlen got native women to leave their employment and then left them in the bush, one woman from Doorawarrah Station and the other from Mooloo Downs Station’. Slater understood that Hedlen subsequently had taken Kitty to Byro Station on the Wooramel River.

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10 Merton G.J. Fitzpatrick, *Daurie Creek*, p.47.
11 *State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 653, Item 342/1925, folio 13, Inspector of Aborigines to CPA, 10 August 1925.*
Fitzpatrick had not complained to him ‘regarding Hedlen taking the woman away’.

It was confirmed later that Fitzpatrick had been in Carnarvon with Kitty and had attempted to proceed south by coastal steamer. He told police sergeant Leen of the Carnarvon police station that he was taking Kitty to Cottesloe where she would be engaged as a household servant. When told by Sergeant Leen that he could not take Kitty away from the district, it was understood he returned with her to Dalgety Downs.14

The Inspector of Aborigines did not investigate Hedlen’s complaint until two years later. When Ernest Mitchell eventually visited Dalgety Downs and reported in August 1925, he advised that Fitzpatrick kept three women, Kitty, Ivy and Rosie. Kitty was the mother of four half-caste children, then aged from six to two years, and Ivy then the mother of five half-caste children aged from eight years to 18 months.15 Ivy subsequently had a sixth child. Both women had tribal husbands, Willie and Isaac, but there is no record of their having had children with them. Rosie had no children. Mitchell described her as ‘an exceptional smart woman who can handle a motor car very well’.16

Mitchell recommended that Rosie, Ivy and her five children and Kitty’s four children ‘be removed right out of the District & kept under sec 12 in the M.R.N. Settlement’. Kitty, he said,
is claimed by an intelligent native named Booree, working at Bijimia (sic) whose claim is based on Booree’s contention that Kitty’s mother gave her to him. Providing that Kitty’s mother, who is working on Yinnetharra (sic) Station, verifies this, Kitty should be handed over to Booree—on the undertaking that the woman Kitty be not allowed to return to Dalgety Downs or the immediate neighbourhood under any circumstances.17

Neville referred the recommendation to the Minister for the North-West, John Drew:

These two women and nine children would have to become inmates of the Moore River Native Settlement, and apparently the condition of affairs has become such a scandal in the district that we shall be compelled to take this action as the only recourse we have against Fitzpatrick. This man is a Justice of the Peace.

Drew took no action.

14 ibid, folio 7 (Copy original on Police 406/24), Sgt M. Leen, 88, to Inspector Simpson, 26 December 1923.
15 ibid, folio 12, Inspector of Aborigines to CPA, 10 August 1925. Neville subsequently ascertained at Moore River that Kitty’s four children were by two white fathers, neither of whom was alleged to be Merton Fitzpatrick. Ivy’s six children were by six fathers, all of them white. According to Ivy, Fitzpatrick was the father of her second child. (Item 342/1925, folio 66) Fitzpatrick’s son, Merton, G.J. Fitzpatrick, denied the claims of paternity made by Kitty and Ivy and insisted that all 10 children were sired by his father: ‘This likely distortion of the truth by the two women was maybe prompted by a desire to protect their beloved Merton Fitzpatrick from prosecution, but it was an untruth, of that there can be little doubt and there can also be little doubt as to the identity of the children’s father’. Merton G.J. Fitzpatrick, Daurie Creek, p.128.
16 ibid, folio 12. Inspector of Aborigines to CPA, 10 August 1925.
17 ibid, folio 13.
Mitchell visited Dalgety Downs on two further occasions. On 13 December he reported that Kitty wanted to marry a native named Willie who worked on Dairy Creek station. Booree had taken another woman, Dolly, as his wife and was satisfied that Kitty should marry Willie. Fitzpatrick said he would offer no opposition.

Mitchell could not prove that Kitty, Ivy and Rosie cohabited with Fitzpatrick:

The native women live in a galvanised house about 35 or 40 feet from the main building & in the same enclosure...the half-caste children are running around the houses alike. There is no doubt that the woman Ivy is Fitzpatrick’s woman & the mother of his children.\(^\text{18}\)

Once again, Mitchell recommended that Ivy and her children be removed under section 12 and placed in the Moore River Native Settlement.

The problem for Neville was how to respond. Even though circumstances suggested that Fitzpatrick cohabited with the three women, it could not be proved. Allegations of sexual intercourse, and paternity in at least one case, were generally held to be true, but neither was an offence against the law as it then stood.

In 1924 the literal meaning of ‘cohabitation’, living together as with husband and wife, had been given to section 43 of the Aborigines Act. It was alleged then that one P.C. Hunt, an overseer at Hamersley Station, was cohabiting with a native woman, Maggie.\(^\text{19}\) The matter was investigated and Hunt’s permit to employ Aborigines was cancelled.\(^\text{20}\) Neville recommended to the Under Secretary for Law that proceedings against Hunt be taken under section 43. The Solicitor General declined and offered the opinion, ‘it is not as far as I am aware an offence to have intercourse with an aboriginal; and this does not seem to me to be a case of “cohabitation”’.\(^\text{21}\)

The effect of that opinion and the lack of evidence other than hearsay about happenings at Dalgety Downs was that Fitzpatrick could not be prosecuted. With legal redress against Fitzpatrick not available, the alternative was to remove his women and children. Mitchell reasoned:

The removal of h/caste girls does not prevent the mothers from breeding further h/castes. We cannot, at present, & it will always be difficult, in the nature of things to punish the father, but the removal of the mother, as well as the child, will have that effect. We cannot do this wholesale.... This could be done, in approved cases, one or two in each district, & a warning given to natives that

\(^\text{18}\) **ibid**, folio 18, Inspector of Aborigines to CPA, 13 December 1925.

\(^\text{19}\) State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 653, Item 195/1924, folio 1, Sworn Complaint, Cockle, 15 March 1925.

\(^\text{20}\) **ibid**, folio not numbered, Circular No 59/24, CPA to all Protectors.

\(^\text{21}\) **ibid**, folio 41. Solicitor General to CPA, 3 July 1924.
breeding half-castes means the loss of the woman for all time.  

Neville supported Mitchell’s recommendation on the grounds that the only present remedy was ‘to remove the ‘cause”. Removal under section 12 required the Minister’s approval. In this instance the minister, the Chief Secretary, Hon. J.M.Drew, was reluctant. He regarded such removal as ‘a form of banishment’. No action was taken and Ivy, Kitty and their nine children continued to reside at the Dalgety Downs homestead.

Inspector Mitchell sought alternatives. Aboriginal elders organised that Kitty should go to her tribal husband, Willie at Dairy Creek Station, and that Ivy be given according to tribal rights to Young Noble of Bidgiemia. Ivy’s youngest child was to remain with her and the others removed to an institution:

Once this woman gives up the whiteman (sic) or is made to give him up, she will of her own will remain with her native man in preference to exile; will be quite happy and contented once she hardens up to the new conditions. Ivy is merely a self willed naughty child & will get over it—taking her away from Fitzpatrick & giving her to a young and handsome full blood who has a good job & has the approval of Ivy’s cowerjuror, & the tribe is merely smacking her hands & telling her ‘not to be silly’.

Ivy and Kitty declined those arrangements on their behalf and continued at Dalgety Downs.

Drew responded to Mitchell’s recommendation for the removal of the women and children to Moore River that instead of exiling the women, remedy should be found in dealing with Fitzpatrick:

If ‘everybody talks about his conduct, if every body knows about it’ and if ‘his fellow justices have discussed resigning in a body to express themselves’, he is not a fit and proper person to be allowed to employ natives, unless the whole thing is a foul conspiracy to injure him. However, what the Inspector saw, as related in paragraph 3 of his report, and the behaviour of Fitzpatrick, afford pretty strong proof in support of what is stated to be the public view.

Drew recommended that Fitzpatrick be warned that if Kitty and Ivy continued to live on his premises consideration would be given to cancelling his permit to employ natives. That was done.

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23 Ibid, folio 16, handwritten footnotes, A.O. Neville, 13 October 1925.
24 Ibid, folio 16, Minister for the North-West to the Secretary for the North-West, 12 October 1925.
25 Booree had taken another wife, Dolly, and did not want Kitty; State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 653, Item 342/1925, folio17. Isaac had forfeited his right to Ivy. He was satisfied with the woman he had, named Mopey, State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 652, Item 342/1925, folio 19.
27 Ibid, folio 24, J.M.Owen, Chief Secretary, to CPA, 26 January 1926.
‘Too White to be Regarded as Aborigines’

A letter was addressed to Fitzpatrick on 1 March 1926, but Kitty, Ivy and their children remained at Dalgety Downs and lived at the homestead in the same manner as previously.

The matter was resolved only after Fitzpatrick sold the property in October 1926. The new owners, Dalgety Downs Pastoral Co. Ltd., resolved that all half-caste children on the station be sent away. Fitzpatrick expressed a wish that the children be sent to New Norcia. The company agreed to pay £100 annually toward the maintenance of the children and the costs of relocating them to Moore River.

Neville agreed: ‘Time has solved this somewhat difficult problem’. He recommended the removal of the children and their mothers, Ivy and Kitty:

The mothers will have to accompany them until the younger children are old enough to be left. They can then return to the station. …

Although he has no jurisdiction in the matter, Mr Merton Fitzpatrick has requested that New Norcia be the destination of these people, and I shall a little later endeavour to arrange for some of these children to be taken there, but in that event we shall have to pay a subsidy of £5 per annum for each.

In a handwritten addendum on the memo, Neville noted ‘New Norcia does not want children under school age’.

One week later, and five days before Christmas, the Honorary Minister for the Chief Secretary, Hon. James Hickey, signed the warrant. Separate warrants under section 12 of the Aborigines Act 1905 were issued instructing the Commissioner of Police ‘forthwith to arrest and apprehend’ an Aboriginal woman ‘Kitty’ and her half-caste children Mick, Paddy, Ruby and Eva, and an Aboriginal woman ‘Ivy’ and her children Iris, Bob, Bessie, Johnny, Ralph and Dick, to remove them from Dalgety Downs Station and ‘safely convey within the boundaries of the Moore River Native Settlement and them safely to keep within such Reserve during the Minister’s pleasure’. The warrant was executed and the women and their children were transported first overland to Carnarvon and then by coastal steamer to Fremantle where they arrived at the end of January 1927.

Smith’s Weekly sensationalised their story under the headline ‘Black Gins’ Grave Charge Against Nor-West Squatter’ and demanded ‘that the very fullest public inquiry be made into the case’:

Huddled together on the Steamer ‘Gascoyne’ on its arrival at Fremantle on Saturday morning was a pathetic group of two black gins and 10 little half-caste children, who had been sent down the coast by the Police Department, to be sent

28 ibid, folio 37, R, Barr Goyder to CPA, 21 October, 1926.
29 ibid, folio 41, CPA to the Under Secretary C.S.D, 13 December 1926.
30 State Records Office North-West, Acc 653, Item 342/1925, Regulation 12A (Form 10) attached to folio 42.
to the Moore River Mission, the home for aborigines, some distance from Perth. One gin was Ivy, aged 21. She is the mother of six of the children whose ages range from 11 years to four months. The other gin was Kitty aged 20, mother of four young children.

Both gins, closely questioned by ‘Smith’s’ representative, adhered to their original story that the father of the children was a station owner in the Gascoyne district in the North-West.  

It is more likely that Kitty was aged about 28 or 29 when she arrived at Fremantle. Hedlen’s letter of complaint dated 26 October 1922 claimed Kitty was ‘roughly between 18 & 19 years of age at the time of writing’. Bryan Clark’s information indicates Kitty was born about 1897, which would mean she was aged about 25, not 18 or 19 when the original complaint was made.

The party were installed at Moore River on 24 January 1927. Neville visited them in late March and ascertained that Ivy had ‘cohabited with Fitzpatrick’ ever since she was a little girl. He made no comment about Kitty, other than to record that she stated Fitzpatrick was not the father of her children and named two other white men. Neville’s comments about her father, Charlie Mortimer, and a request that Paddy and Ruby take his surname, indicates an inconsiderate attitude towards the naming of children removed to the settlement:

With regard to Charles Mortimer’s interest in two of Kitty’s children, these are Paddy and Ruby. Kitty says Mortimer brought them up, and she has no objection to their being called Mortimer in consequence though he is not their father. They might as well have Mortimer’s name as any other to which they are not entitled.

Two years later he directed ‘Kitty Dalgety will be called Kitty Wadaby, and her family will be Wadaby. This is Kitty’s native name’.  

Neville’s authority over Kitty and Ivy was indisputable. Even though they were older than sixteen and therefore not wards of the Chief Protector, and even though, according to the evidence of Mitchell’s report, they did not live with their tribal husbands, but cohabited with Fitzpatrick at the Dalgety Downs homestead, they could not escape the provisions of the Aborigines Act 1905. They were full-blooded Aborigines, and under section 3 were deemed lawfully to be Aboriginal within the meaning of the Aborigines Act. Section 12 of the Act authorized the minister to remove any Aborigine to be ‘kept within the boundaries of a reserve’.

32 *ibid*, folio 1.
33 State Records Office, Aborigines, Acc 653, Item 342/1925, folio 66, file note CPA, 5 April 1927.
34 *ibid*, folio 91, file note CPA, 5 August 1929. The family continues under the surname ‘Dalgety’.
35 *ibid*, folio 12, Inspector of Aborigines to CPA, 10 August 1925. Kitty was less than full-blooded, but not half-caste. Her mother, Dolly, was full-blooded, but her father, Charlie Mortimer, was a half-caste. Kitty would have been categorised as ‘three-quarter-caste’, but under section 3(a) would have been regarded as ‘an aboriginal inhabitant of Australia’ for the purposes of the Act.
Moore River was a gazetted Aboriginal reserve and the law allowed that if the minister decided on Neville’s advice that Kitty and Ivy should be removed from their Gascoyne homelands they could be detained there at the minister’s pleasure.

The status of the children was less certain. Evidence presented by Inspector Mitchell after he visited Dalgety Downs indicated they lived at the homestead with their mothers and Fitzpatrick: ‘the half-caste children go running around the houses alike’. It might reasonably have been argued that they did not live or habitually associate with Aborigines other than their mothers and therefore did not meet the requirements of Aboriginality under section 3. If that were the case, Neville’s actions in removing them to Moore River might have been unsafe at law. As it was, Kitty and Ivy were named in the warrants for seizure and removal only because Neville believed that the children were too young to be separated from their mothers. He intended that when the children were old enough Kitty and Ivy would leave the settlement and be returned to the Gascoyne district.

The circumstances which decided the removal of the children from Dalgety Downs suggest their welfare was not Neville’s immediate concern. He did not intercede until five years after Hedlen’s complaint was brought to his attention, in which time Ivy bore Fitzpatrick a sixth child. Merton Fitzpatrick had cared for all the children as his own and they enjoyed the additional care of their grandparents, Dolly Bidjiemia and Charlie Mortimer. It was reported that Fitzpatrick’s relationships with Kitty, Ivy and Rosie caused discomfort among his neighbouring pastoralists, but even that did not persuade Neville or his minister to act. Neville acquiesced in the request of the Dalgety Downs Pastoral Company to remove the children because, ‘it solved this somewhat difficult question’. The children were banished from their country ostensibly for the sins of their father, but the ‘somewhat difficult question’ to which Neville referred already had been resolved. When Fitzpatrick sold Dalgety Downs, that is before the children were removed, he left the station and stayed at Carnarvon for a time before moving to Perth.

Ivy died on 30 May 1927 five months after she arrived at Moore River. Her baby Richard died at Moore River aged two in November 1929. Contrary to Fitzpatrick’s wish that her children and Kitty’s be sent to New Norcia and Neville’s undertaking that he would try to arrange the transfer when they reached school age, all remained at Moore River for several years until Neville saw fit to send them out to employment. They lived in separate dormitories.

Kitty sought several times to be allowed to return to the Gascoyne. On 7 December 1928 she wrote to Neville:

37 ibid, folio 412, CPA to Under Secretary C.S.D. 13 December 1926.
38 Merton G.J. Fitzpatrick, Daurie Creek, pp.54-55.
Would you be so kind to answer this question for me & well Sir my Mother is willing to let me. Get married to a boy name Caption Jones. And I thought I would ask you first. Now as I am Under you. And he stops with my Mother in Eionetharria [Yinatharra] and if they are not there well they might be in Dalgety Downs because they told me that they was going there in the Letter they Wrote to me. And Sir Would you Send for Caption Jones and my Mother and Father to come down to get Married please Sir have no more to say Sir.\(^\text{39}\)

Neville declined because Kitty already had a husband, Willie, but he did suggest that she might be returned to Dalgety Downs ‘or wherever her tribal husband is now located’. Her children, however, would remain at the settlement:

Naturally I am not prepared to return Kitty if there is the slightest suspicion that the further procreation of half-caste children is to be brought about. If ‘Willie’ is unable to control his wife then it would be inadvisable to send her back. Kitty is a young, pre-possessing, full blood woman, and there have been many offers made to me by men desirous of marrying her.\(^\text{40}\)

Willie had been working on Dairy Creek Station, but in December 1929 Inspector Mitchell advised that his movements were uncertain; ‘he is somewhere between Dalgety Downs and Byro’.\(^\text{41}\) The matter was resolved in April 1930 when the manager of Dalgety Downs wrote on behalf of Willie requesting that Kitty be allowed to marry him:

A native, Willie, supposed to have been born at Dairy Creek, having known Kitty for a long time, and having lost his wife Topsy through death, wished for her to come here and marry him. Willie has worked here on and off for some time and is dependent \(\text{(sic)}\) and reliable as far as can be said of a native. We have not heard of Kitty having married any native since she left here.\(^\text{42}\)

Neville approved, subject to Willie paying Kitty’s fare and on condition that she ‘did not consort with white men as in the past’. He would not allow her children to leave with her: ‘there are four of them, and their fathers are alleged to be white men’.\(^\text{43}\)

Kitty returned to Dalgety Downs in May 1930 to be reunited with Willie. She did not remain long with him, however. They separated a few months after Kitty returned from Moore River. Willie took another wife and Kitty married Willie Noble whom she had met at Yinatharra Station. In March 1932, she and Willie were working on Moolloo Downs station. Kitty had

\(^\text{39}\) ibid, folio 88, Kitty Delgety \(\text{(sic)}\) to AON, CSD Records, 7 December 1928.
\(^\text{40}\) ibid, folio 94, CPA to Inspector of Aborigines, 31 October 1929.
\(^\text{41}\) ibid, folio 96, Ernest Mitchell, Inspector to CPA, 14 December 1929.
\(^\text{42}\) ibid, folio 102, P Macnish, Manager Dalgety Downs to CPA, 4 April 1930. The word intended probably was ‘dependable’.
\(^\text{43}\) ibid, folio 105, CPA to R. Macnish, Dalgety Downs Station, 7 May, 1930.
another half-caste baby. She named ‘Allen the overseer at Dalgety Downs’, as the father.44

Neville was advised that Kitty apparently had breached the condition of her return from Moore River, but he declined to take further action. He wrote to Constable Donegan, the Protector of Aborigines at Gascoyne Junction:

It would be competent of me to instruct that the return of Kitty to the Settlement should be undertaken as a warrant is still in existence covering her internment therein, but if it can be avoided I do not desire to take such action. If, however, Kitty continues to consort with white men it may become necessary to do this, as she is a comparatively young woman.45

Kitty’s baby died in June. Constable Donegan advised:

Mr Scott [of Mooloo Downs Station] seems to think that the baby was taken out in the hot sun too much on the way to Mooloo Downs shortly after it was born.

Mrs Scott did all she could for the baby but they could not keep it alive.46

Kitty and Willie Noble had four more children, Dawn, Betty, Herbert and Eric.

Merton Fitzpatrick died in a Perth suburban hospital in July 1944. At the time of his death he was an impoverished alcoholic.47 When Kitty died at the age of 73 she was still in the Gascoyne. Her four children with Merton Fitzpatrick survived her. Mick, her eldest son, told Bryan Clark in 1986:

My parents were Merv Fitzpatrick, a white bloke, and my mother’s name was Kitty. She was Dolly Bidgemia’s daughter. Mr Neville, the Aboriginal Protector, came there [to Dalgety Downs] when I was young and took us away. We were taken down to the Moore River Native Settlement. We had to go to school there. They had to drag me away to get me educated. I stayed there a long time.48

Mick lived at the Settlement for about eight years. He left in 1933 and eventually returned to the Gascoyne where he worked at Bidgiemia and Hill Springs Stations. He recollected his childhood:

Old Dolly Bidgemia is my granny. My granny used to take us on an old spring cart. We were little fellas then. We’d sit up the back end and watch the big wheels go round. We thought it was great. We would travel all day in the cart.49

44 ibid, folio 121, A.J. Donegan, Protector of Aborigines, to CPA, 25 June 1932.
45 ibid, folio 119, CPA to Constable A.J. Donegan, 1 April 1932.
46 ibid, folio 123. A.J. Donegan Const. 1504 to CPA, 14 July 1932.
47 Merton G. J. Fitzpatrick, Daurie Creek, pp.54-55.
49 ibid.
Ruby married Mowan Underwood, a Nyungar who had spent his early years in the Blackwood district around Bridgetown.⁵⁰ They did not settle long in one place and like many families moved to wherever work was available. Ruby bore Mowan a son, Snowy, before he died on the Egerton Warburton property ‘Yerriminup’ on the Frankland River near Manjimup. Ruby did not marry again, but had three more children, one of them, Lilly, to Rex Warburton while she was a domestic servant at ‘Yerriminup’.⁵¹

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⁵¹ *ibid*, pp.42-43; ‘My mother’s case was no different from that of a lot of other Noongar people. When there were few white women in the country, white men took Noongar women whether they were willing or not, and the result was the birth of more than a few fair Noongars. Mum had a few little mates in the camp who were fair like her, though her mother was a dark-skinned traditional woman and her sisters were dark too’. 