



**NAA: A463, 1961/7655**

**Series number:** A463

**Control symbol:** 1961/7655

**Barcode:** 1862372

**Number of pages:** 9

**Title:** Les Foster - Treatment of Aborigines on Palm Island

Copies of this record are provided for research or study purposes. Before making use of the material for other purposes (for example publication) please refer to information on copyright obligations and citing archival records available on our website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au).

PRIME MINISTER'S  
DEPARTMENT.

FILE No.

61/7655

PART No.

RETAIN PERMANENTLY

DISPOSAL  
AUTHORITY RDA951

DISPOSAL  
CLASS 1-1

SUBJECT.

LES FOSTER

TREATMENT OF ABORIGINES

ON PALM ISLAND

RELATED PAPERS.

See inside cover.

DISPOSAL CATEGORY.

A

10,200/59.

Folio No.	Referred to.	Clearing Officer's Initials.	Date Cleared.	Folio No.	Referred to.	Clearing Officer's Initials.	Date Cleared.	Folio No.	Referred to.	Clearing Officer's Initials.	Date Cleared.
1-2	Dept 4 2/1	PM									
3	Dept 4	PS	5/1								
	R/S 10/2	PM									
	R/S 10/2	BN	10/2								
4	Dept 4 3/1	PM	3/1								
	Dept 4	PM	7/2								
1-5	P/A	KAW	13/2								



19-12-61

The Secretary  
of The House of Representatives,  
Canberra  
Australia

Dear Sir

It gives me great pleasure, of writing to you, to let you know that my people are anxiously waiting for the day when all the Australian Aborigines will come under one Government.

When that day comes then we'll have a voice in the affairs of our Settlements.

See the things that goes in Aboriginal Settlement if it gets to the paper it will open every body eyes who reads the papers.

Palm Island is my home town and the things that happenis ~~tot~~ day on Palm Island.

See If we could have a Representative from Canberra to come up and stay for a few days we'd like him to meet the people. (I mean the native People)

and then you will get a clear Picture of how we are getting treated up here. Our girls and like caged up animals, when ever they go a black tracker are told to follow them they can't talk to there boy friends even at the Pictures they can't sit to-gather, if they aske for permission to sit or talk with there girl friends they get knock back or be ordered to jail.

which it isint right. On the Island we have far to many whites. Palm Island is a place where ~~color~~ colour Bare is we have two Schools one for they whites and one for our native Children.

Wages on the Island is very very low. you would have to be the bossis Pet before you can get a good pay. I myself. I get 4/- a day I am not very well liked by the whites and some of the natives.

These Natives come from Torres Strait. I think they should



be sent back to their homes. because they are not our people and we dont want them on a Australian Aboriginal Settlements.

The only thing I know that will make Palm Island a happy home for us. is to change the white staff because now we have four Superintendent and the people dont know who to listen to, the other thing I did to report to you is that Mother's on Palm Island who are receiving Child endowment money is taken out of each pay to pay for four care of Fruit (and no recets are given to mother) over 1200 mothers received Child endowment. I think and we all think that the money is being used some other way which we do not know that is why we would like a Representative from Canberra to come up to Palm Island and spend a few days with us and you'll find out what really goes on at Palm Island.

Here's hoping my letter will received your ~~flavour~~ favorable Consitration

I remain  
yours Faithfully

Les Foster  
Palm Island  
Native Leader.  
Palm Island

Journeville  
7.9.

(PS

wishing you all a Merry Xmas  
and a bright & happy new year.  
And May God bless you. all.



(AIR. MAIL.)



No

The Secretary  
of The House of Representatives,

Canberra.

Australia



10 1310  
33  
10 1310

From  
Les Foster  
Palm Island  
via  
Townsville  
79.





THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T., 45.

*Dept*

Mr. A. L. Moore,  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.



I am not sure to whom the  
attached letter should be referred.  
Do you think the P.M.'s Dept. would  
deal with it.

*A. Parkes*

Clerk Assistant.  
22/12/61.



WNW:RK

3

- 5 JAN 1962

61/7655

Dear Mr. Foster,

Your letter to the Secretary of the House of Representatives regarding conditions at Palm Island has been passed to me.

I am having enquiries made and will write to you again as soon as possible.

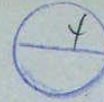
Yours sincerely,

*for*  
(E.J. Bunting)  
Secretary

Mr. Les Foster,  
Palm Island,  
Townsville,  
NORTH QUEENSLAND.

*Copy Sac Lewis (Hull) Admci  
- - (Bain) Atk 25 JAN 1962  
- Bunting, info*





10/2

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,  
RELIANCE HOUSE, 301 FLINDERS LANE,  
MELBOURNE.

IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

NO. A.55/3302

The Secretary,  
Prime Minister's Department  
CANBERRA. A.C.T.



30 JAN 1962

Subject: Representations by Mr. Les FOSTER of  
Palm Island, Townsville.

Reference: Your memorandum of 4th January, 1962  
No. 61/7655.

In his letter Mr. Foster refers to a number of aspects which do not come within the province of this Department. However a report has been forwarded by the Director of Social Services, Brisbane, concerning the disbursement of child endowment and is as follows:-

"All child endowment payments in respect of children residing on the aboriginal settlement at Palm Island are arranged through the Director of Native Affairs. In the case of those children who live in dormitories and are clothed and fed by the Department of Native Affairs the endowment is paid to the Department on a normal institutional basis. This money is used to provide fruit, sweets, ice creams and other extras not covered by the prepared scale of rations. It is assumed that the complaint made by Mr. Foster does not relate to the child endowment payments made in this manner.

With regard to the children who are in the full custody, care and control of their parents a schedule is forwarded to the Director of Native Affairs each four weeks setting forth the individual amounts payable to each endowee. A cheque for the total amount shown on the schedule is also forwarded.

A copy of this schedule is forwarded by the Director of Native Affairs to the Superintendent at the Palm Island settlement who credits the various amounts due, to the individual trust accounts of the respective endowees.

In order to ensure that the children receive an adequate supply of fresh fruit at a reasonable price the Department of Native Affairs makes a daily issue of fresh fruit (chiefly apples and oranges which cannot be grown locally) to each child attending school. A deduction of 4d. per day is made from the trust account of each endowee to meet the cost of supplying this fruit.

In his letter Mr. Foster mentions that there are more than 1200 mothers in receipt of child endowment. It is not known how this figure was arrived at. The records of this Department show that there are some 140 endowees to whose trust accounts endowment is individually credited and approximately 360 children in respect of whom endowment is paid to the Department of Native Affairs on an institutional basis."

*H. J. Goodes*  
(H. J. GOODES) *D*  
Director-General.



61/7655

13 FEB 1962

Dear Mr. Foster,

I have had the Social Services Department report to me on the payments of child endowment to the mothers of the Palm Island Settlement - the matter you raised in your letter of 19th December.

There are about 140 mothers at Palm Island who look after their own children, and the child endowment in respect of these children is paid into their individual trust accounts by the Superintendent.

To make sure that the children get enough fresh fruit, the Superintendent issues some fresh fruit daily, and he does make a deduction of 4d per day from every trust account to pay for the fruit. I am sure you would agree that it is a good thing to provide in this way for a cheap and regular supply of fresh fruit for the children.

The other matters you raised in your letter are not dealt with by the Commonwealth Government.

Yours sincerely,

*E.J. Bunting*  
(E.J. Bunting)  
Secretary

Mr. Les Foster,  
Palm Island,  
Townsville,  
NORTH QUEENSLAND.

*Robert Tennison*  
S.S.  
13 FEB 1962