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ABORIGINES ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE INC.

(159) 3283

South Australia

President:  
Dr. CHARLES DUGUID  
Adelaide

Secretary:  
Mr. E. M. WILLINGTON  
53 Myall Avenue  
Kensington Gardens

53 Myall Avenue,  
Kensington Gardens,  
17th December, 1961.

Treasurer:  
Mr. W. PARIS The Director,  
443 South Road Commonwealth Social Services Dept,  
Black Forest 61 Gawler Place,  
Adelaide.



Dear Sir,

At the last meeting of the Committee of the League the matter of Social Service payments to aborigines was discussed and I was directed to ask if you would be good enough to inform the League why payment of Social Service Benefits to aborigines cannot be paid in cash to the recipients.

The Committee would be glad to have the information asked for as soon as convenient to you.

Yours faithfully,

*E.M. Willington*  
(E.M. Willington)

Hon Secretary.

*By AD. Pennington  
As discuss  
taken 20/12/61*

21st December, 1961

Mr. E.M. Willington,  
Hon. Secretary,  
Aborigines Advancement League Inc.,  
53 Myall Avenue,  
KENSINGTON GARDENS

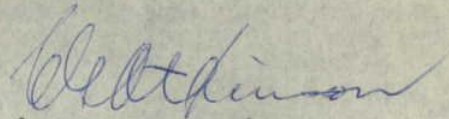
Dear Sir,

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of 17th December about the method of payment of social service benefits to aborigines.

It is assumed that your inquiry relates to those cases in which the payment of pension is being made through the Aborigines Protection Board, the Superintendent of a Mission or the Manager of a pastoral property.

This question is one of policy and your letter has therefore been referred to the Director-General of the Department of Social Services for consideration and reply to you.

Yours faithfully,

  
(C.G. Atkinson)  
Director

SG

A55  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

(161) 3285

Telephone : 8 0133

Department of Social Services,  
Churchill Building,  
61 Gawler Place, Adelaide

In reply please quote

P.2



21st December, 1961

Director-General

Payment of Pensions to Aborigines

Question of Payment direct to Pensioner.

/2. A letter from the Secretary, Aborigines Advancement League Inc. and a copy of this office acknowledgment are referred herewith.

In this State quite a number of pensions to those natives in and around country towns are being paid through the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board on the Secretary's recommendation, i.e. the Department is guided by the Secretary's opinion as to the method of payment most likely to ensure that the native receives the benefit of his pension.

The question raised by the League is not clear but it has been assumed that it relates to the payment of pensions to the Secretary, Aborigines Protection Board, as warrantee. The matter is one which has no doubt been raised before and, as it is one of policy, it appears necessary to refer the League's request for your consideration.

(C.G. Atkinson)  
Director

37/C

3286

3286 (162)

4 JAN 1962

Mr. E. M. Willington,  
Hon. Secretary,  
Aborigines Advancement League Inc.,  
53 Myall Avenue,  
Kensington Gardens,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Dear Sir,

As promised, the Director of Social Services, Adelaide, has referred to me for reply your letter of 17th December about the method of payment of social service benefits to aborigines.

It seems that your enquiry relates to the practice of making payment of age, invalid and widows' pensions to a warrantee or agent on behalf of the pensioner. Whilst some pensions are paid in this way, the guiding principle is that, wherever possible, payment should be made to the individual concerned.

Payment is made direct to natives who are living in townships and closely settled areas and who have demonstrated their ability to manage their own affairs. Where the pensioner requests, or where the Department considers it desirable, the whole or portion of the pension may be paid to some other person or authority on behalf of the pensioner. The reason is to ensure that, in cases where the native is not sufficiently advanced to be able to handle money, the pension is spent in his best interests. This is in no way a discriminatory provision because it applies equally to all pensioners.

Where aborigines are being cared for in a controlled community such as a Government settlement, Church mission or large pastoral property, payment is made on the same basis as to inmates of benevolent homes, i.e. portion of the pension is paid to the aborigine for his own personal use and the balance is paid to the authority controlling the community for the maintenance of the pensioner and his welfare generally.

In all cases, however, where pensioners reside in a controlled community the pocket money portion of the pension is paid in a lump sum to the superintendent of the settlement or mission or to the manager of the pastoral property who in turn pays it to the individual pensioners so that they actually receive cash in the hand.

I trust that the foregoing gives you the information your League desires.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) H. J. GOODES

(H. J. GOODES) NAA: A884, A55 PART 16



**NAA: A884, A55 PART 17**

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3310 (28)

# ABORIGINES ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE INC.

South Australia

*President:*  
Dr. CHARLES DUGUID  
Adelaide

*Secretary:*  
Mr. E. M. WILLINGTON  
53 Myall Avenue  
Kensington Gardens

DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
12 FEB 1962  
OF SOCIAL SERVICES

53 Myall Avenue,  
Kensington Gardens,  
7th February, 1962.

*Treasurer:* Mr H. J. Goodes.,  
Mr. W. PARIS Director-General Social Services,  
443 South Road Reliance House, 301 Flinders Lane,  
Black Forest Melbourne.

*Folio 3286*

Dear Sir, Thank you for your letter of January 4th, giving details of the method of payment of Social Service benefits to aborigines. Our League appreciates the difficulties involved in making welfare payments to a scattered group of people at various stages of development. We should like, however, to urge the special case for cash payment of benefits to the people on the two South Australian Government Reserves at Point Pearce and Point McLeay. These Reserves are not "controlled communities" in any sense which is important for the payment of Social Service benefits. They are not closed economies. Inhabitants work outside the Reserves when they can get work (incidentally, paying income tax on their earnings). Families move in and out of the Reserves. They are fully accustomed to the handling of money, even though their environment is "controlled" to the extent that their earnings are supplemented by free housing, cheap milk etc. Rations are available to destitute families; so are they to the community as a whole.

We feel that it is humiliating to people who have been responsible for the dispersal of their incomes for many years to be reduced to the status of minors when they are eligible for the Old Age Pension. More than this, we feel that such a policy cuts across what we are convinced should be the basis of all government assistance to aborigines "to help them to assume full responsibility for their own lives". To those who would object that they would spend the money foolishly, we would reply that people can only learn by doing, and ask which of us could justify every item of our expenditure according to a rational plan. If necessary, adult education on nutrition, etc, could accompany cash grants.

At the present time, people on the Reserves who receive the Pension, are ignorant as to their financial position. It is difficult for them to find out what balance stands to their credit after "pocket money", purchases and Orders are deducted. The League trusts that you will give due consideration to the points raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

*E.M. Willington*  
(E.M. Willington)  
Hon Secretary.

*Mr. P. ...*

*Mr. Willington* Please send ...  
enclose a copy of ...  
purchases ... (folio 3286)  
a copy of this letter ...  
MMA 1088A 155 17

3313 (24)

37/JP.  
A.55/3313.

20 FEB 1962

Mr. E. M. Willington,  
Hon. Secretary,  
Aborigines Advancement League Inc.,  
53 Myall Avenue,  
Kensington Gardens,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 7th February suggesting that social service pensions be paid in cash to pensioner natives at Point Pearce and Point McLeay.

You will appreciate that in matters of this kind the Department is guided by the views of the authority having control of the affairs of aboriginal natives in the State concerned.

Consequently I have asked for a report, and I will further consider what you have had to say when additional information is to hand.

Yours faithfully,

*H. J. P.*  
(H. J. GOODES)  
Director-General.

The Director of Social Services,  
ADELAIDE.

Social service payments to natives at  
Point Pearce and Point McLeay.

...

Referred for your information. A copy of Mr. Willington's letter is attached as also is a copy of my reply to Mr. Willington's earlier letter of 17th December which you referred here for reply.

*See file 2545 1*  
*P*

Would you be good enough to discuss Mr. Willington's recent letter with the Protector of Aborigines and let me know his views. In this regard please see your memorandum of 5th June, 1960, Ex.1/JMcK. It would be of particular interest to have the Protector's comments on the second last paragraph of Mr. Willington's letter.

*H. J. P.*  
(H. J. GOODES)  
Director-General.

20 FEB 1962



**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

3379[92]

Telephone: 8 0133

Ex. 1/JMcK

In reply, please quote:

A.1(7)

Department of Social Services,

Churchill Building,

61 Gawler Place, Adelaide

28th May, 1962.



The Director-General,  
MELBOURNE.

also 3313 of 28/5/62

Social service payments to aboriginal natives  
at Point Pearce and Point McLeay.  
(Your memo. A.55/3373 of 17.5.62)

...

Enclosed is a photostat copy of a letter received  
from Mr. C.J. Millar, Acting Secretary of the Aborigines  
Protection Board.

It is noted that the Aborigines Department are  
now paying each pensioner the whole of his pension in  
cash less £2.10.0 per person, which is being retained in  
a Trust Account to cover store debits or other contingencies.

The Aborigines Department are also prepared to  
agree to natives at the abovementioned Government settlements  
being paid direct from this office. Arrangements will be  
made accordingly upon receipt of your approval.

Would you also please advise as to whether a payment  
for child allowance to aboriginal pensioners should now be  
made.

*Miller (Pahny)*

C.G. ATKINSON,  
DIRECTOR.

3385  
98

Payment of pension to Aboriginal Natives on South Australian Settlements.

Director (Policy)

Up to now pensions for natives on the South Australian Settlements of Pt. McLeay and Pt. Pearce have been paid through the Aborigines Protection Board. The arrangements were that the pensioner would receive 15/- a week in cash and the balance would be credited to individual trust accounts which would be debited with the cost of goods supplied for the pensioners' maintenance. There would generally remain a credit balance which the pensioners could draw under supervision.

From time to time representations have been made for the payment of pensions direct to these Settlements pensioners. Mr. Clyde Cameron, M.P. was vocal in May 1960 but as the scheme had operated for only three months at that time and the State Protector was convinced of the appropriateness of the payment arrangements they were retained.

In February 1962, Mr. E.M. Willington, Hon. Secretary of the Aborigines Advancement League Inc., South Australia asked for a review of the payment procedure, and this was referred to the State authorities through Director, Adelaide - folios 3310 and 3313.

Apparently as a result of this referral, the Aborigines Protection Board have arrived at the conclusion that, apart from three special individual cases, all pensions could now be paid ~~direct~~ to pensioners at Pt. McLeay and Pt. Pearce direct from this Department. It may take a little time to make the transition in some cases, - for the reason that <sup>details</sup> details against the trust accounts will need to be met, but in the meantime all the pension except £2.10.0 will be paid to the pensioners in cash - the £2.10.0 will be held to adjust trust account <sup>details</sup> details where necessary. Folios 3377/8.

The Board's change of attitude is, I think, 'exciting' news, but it brings its own problems. The Board has now asked if the Department would "consider the payment of a child allowance to pensioners who are resident on Pt. Pearce and Pt. McLeay Reserves, and who are actually caring for and fully supporting a child or children". It appears we should read the request as also referring to additional pension for children.

It was decided as a matter of policy in December 1959 not to pay child's allowances or additional pension in respect of children of pensioners in controlled communities. This was recently confirmed after consideration of a query from the State Commissioner of Native Welfare - see folios 3362/3.

✓ The proposal that pensioners at Pt. McLeay and Pt. Pearce should in future receive their pension direct takes those settlements out of the category of controlled communities so far as this Department is concerned. From a pension payment point of view, there will be no difference between pensioners at the two settlements and native pensioners living in or around towns who already receive allowances and additional pension. The parents of children at the Settlements

receive endowment and although they receive some assistance in the way of accommodation, the parents generally are responsible for the maintenance of the children. I suggest approval be sought to the payment of child's allowances and additional pension in appropriate cases to pensioners at Pt. McLeay and Pt. Pearce.

(A.S.)  
Clerk (Policy)

6/6/62

Yes, it seems that, with the exceptions mentioned, the pensioners on the two Government settlements ~~mentioned~~ referred to, could be treated in the same way as the pensioners on the Government reserves and stations in New South Wales, if of foreign nature. This being so, the pensioners are entitled to child's allowance and additional pension for children and also supplementary assistance if otherwise qualified.

Please inform the Director, Adelaide accordingly.

See fol 3391.

J. R. Rouse  
DIRECTOR (POLICY)

7/6/62

37/RT

3391 (104)

A.55/3391

18 JUN 1962

The Director of Social Services,  
ADELAIDE.

Subject: Social Service Payments to  
Aboriginal Natives at Point  
Pearce and Point McLeay.

Reference: Your A.1(7) of 28th May, 1961.

There is no objection to the Aborigines Department proposal that pensioners at the Settlements of Point Pearce and Point McLeay should, with certain specified exceptions, be paid their pensions direct after a period of adjustment involving the individual Pensions Trust Accounts.

The effect of the new arrangement is that the two Settlements will not in future be "controlled communities" so far as this Department is concerned. In other words, for the purposes of payment of social service benefits the native pensioners concerned will be treated as 'fringe natives'. Children's allowances, additional pension for children, and supplementary assistance may therefore be paid to qualified persons at Point Pearce and Point McLeay.

*H*  
*Decision on folio 338.*

(Sgd.) H. J. GOODES  
Per I.P.

(H. J. GOODES)  
Director-General