



SO FAR, SO GOOD



A report on the International Year of the Child from Helen L'Orange Executive Director, IYC National Committee of NGO's.

The very pleasant surprise that has emerged in the celebration of the International Year of the Child in Australia has been the extent of local community participation in the Year.

Fuelled by \$40,000 \$1: \$1 seeding grant funding from the Federal Government to the State Governments, local and regional IYC committees have sprung up all over the country. There are more than 200 operating throughout Australia. The New South Wales Government has put a great deal of additional money and staff into its local committees and have established over 100 local committees in New South Wales alone.

The State and Territory IYC Committees and their secretariats have been flooded with interest and enquiries. Many have established Kid's Councils to ensure consultation with and participation by children in their year. Kid's Councils are a feature of many of the local committees too.

National consultations with children are reaching detailed proposal stages as the strong sense of need for children to have a say and a go permeates IYC.

Co-ordination on National projects such as the National Consultation is being facilitated through the IYC National Committee of NGOs, IYC Commonwealth/State Ministers' Committee and IYC Events Task Force.

Publicity and Publications

Co-ordination of the Federal Government's publicity launch "Care for Kids" is another example

of the IYC structure in Australia working effectively.

The "Care for Kids" record and sheet music are now available in music shops throughout Australia.

The IYC National Committee of NGOs' publications IYC HAPPENINGS and IYC ISSUES are providing information and stimulation.

Many State and local committees are publishing their own Newsletters.

The UNICEF Committee of Australia's NEWSLETTER is into its 16th edition.

The Department of Social Security's IYC Unit is publishing Progress Reports and bulletins.

The exchange of information is helping to maximise enthusiasm and interest.

Media coverage has been generally wide and intensive. The fear of a "year long birthday party" is not materialising with the media giving good coverage to such issues as the disadvantaged child, children and the media, child abuse, cuts in children's services funding, children and the arms race, education, children in developing countries and Aboriginal children.

Projects

A vast variety of projects and programmes are underway in Australia. To mention some:—

* **Buy a Bucket of Water** — This project is being sponsored by the International Co-operative Alliance.

— a scheme to help provide those in need with easily obtainable supplies of water. Australian organisations are proposing to

mount the project in Australia.

* **National Conference** — With Professor Konopka and Professor Berfenstam as the overseas speakers the Conference has contributed to the UN aim of "advocacy for children". Proceedings of the Conference should be available in April/May from the Department of Social Security, Canberra.

* **"Seen But Not Heard"** — N.S.W. Women's Advisory Board have produced a film on children's rights.

* **"Child's Eye View Exhibition"** — Western Australia is mounting the exhibition showing the world from a child's perspective and viewpoint.

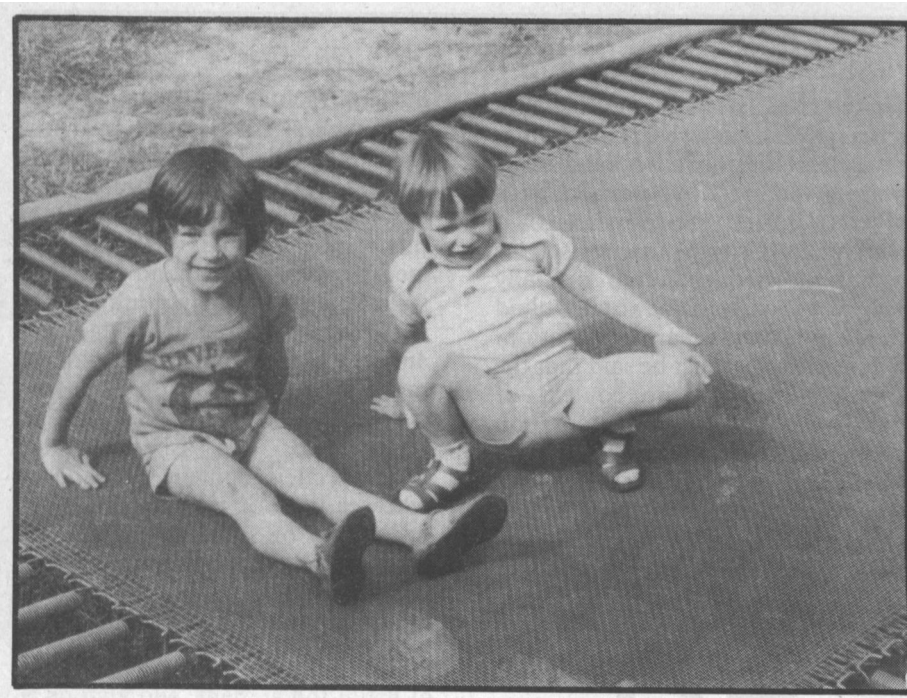
* **"Rigarmarole"** — South Australian children are busily measuring in "kid lengths" and are keen to get comparative figures from children around the world, e.g. How many "kid-widths" fit around the outside of a telephone booth?

* **Children's International Film Carnival** — The carnival will travel to capital cities and major country towns throughout Australia during March to August.

The films chosen for this special occasion will be representative of many cultures demonstrating, in an entertaining and visual form, the lifestyles, aspirations and joys of being a child.

* **Children of Parents in Conflict** — Conference to be held 19-24 August in Adelaide. The Conference is being arranged by the

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- * Community Functioning and the Child/Family — Convener, Mr G. Gregory.
- * The Aboriginal Child — Co-conveners, Rev. L. Semple and Rev. C. Jacobs.
- * The Law and the Rights of the Child — Convener, Mrs H. Southcott
- * The Declaration of the Rights of the Child — Convener, Mrs H. Beckmann.

IYC in Australia can be summed up as "so far, so good". The IYC REPORT (February 1979) from New York indicates that this is true throughout the world "It is evident that the first part of the General Assembly's mandate — advocacy — is being fulfilled. Indeed, at times it is in danger of being over-fulfilled: can it be possible that individuals, organisations, governments, pop stars, poets, teachers, men of every known kind of religious cloth, can it be possible, one asks again, that they mean to do what they say?"

There are promises being made now which should last the children of the world well into 3,000 A.D., the Fourth millenium. Only a humanity which has gone mad would misuse this reservoir of goodwill."

All associated with IYC are earnestly working towards building into IYC the ongoing mechanisms which will ensure that the "reservoir of goodwill" is conserved, and tapped and not left to evaporate at the end of 1979.

- South Australian Government.
- * **Child Care Switchboard** — The New South Wales State Committee is planning radio talk-back programmes between parents/children and health education and welfare workers with inbuilt provision for follow-up.
- * **March for Millions** — Thousands of Tasmanians participated in the March for Millions which aimed at raising \$100,000 for children in developing countries.

National Policy for Children and Families

The IYC National Committee of NGOs has stressed, as a priority in its work programme, the establishment of processes and machinery to develop a National Policy for Children and Families. The IYC National Committee of NGOs has

recommended to the Prime Minister and the Minister Responsible for IYC Matters in Australia that a process be instituted to enable open consultation between all such groups, including government at all levels, federal, state and local, and all interested members of the community.

The 26 member IYC National Committee of NGOs has established a sub-committee structure. The nine sub-committees are:—

- * The Child in the World — Convener, Mr W. Langshaw
- * The Developing Child — Convener, Dr. C. Isbister.
- * The Child in Play and Creativity — Convener, Ms. S. Macauley.
- * The Child, Education and the Media — Convener, Mr Greg Taylor.
- * The Child Under Threat — Convener, Lady Thomson.