

# Achievements of the Good Neighbour Movement 1949-72

Leaflet from: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

## **The Good Neighbour Movement was formally launched at the first Citizenship Convention in January, 1950.**

In the 21 years since their inauguration the Councils have influenced the Australian community towards a wider acceptance of the immigration programme and have enlisted the community's support in the work of the integration of new settlers.

There are Good Neighbour Councils in each State and Territory which have successfully enlisted the active support and co-operation of some 960 community agencies and thousands of Good Neighbour volunteers to assist in migrant integration and as a consequence to promote their desire to become Australian citizens.

In 1950/51, Government sponsorship of the Councils amounted to \$16,012 and the said staff throughout Australia was three. Because of the successful activities of the Movement, expenditure has increased over the intervening years and the 1972/73 allocation to Councils is \$620,000. Councils' staffs now number 70.

As well as head offices in each capital city, there are ten regional offices and five sub-offices which have become operational in recent years. These offices were established to bring the services available through the Good Neighbour Councils to areas of high migrant population. These offices are supported in this task by some 2,187 branch members and 550 representatives of the Councils.

The Movement has undergone a major change

in role in latter years. This followed the report in October, 1967 of the sub-committee set up by the Committee on Social Patterns of Immigration

Advisory Council stated when reporting on the returnee rate of migrants that the Movement was a "potentially" rather than an "actually" effective force. It recommended that the Movement's activities be reappraised and, if necessary, greater Government resources be made available for it to become more effective. As a consequence a meeting between the Presidents of the Good Neighbour Councils and the Minister was held in September, 1968.

Initially Councils had undertaken a purely co-ordinating role — this was their basic function from 1950-68. As a result of the September 1968 meeting with the Minister, Councils agreed to extend their role to include:

- Co-operation with all organisations interested in migrant integration, and
- direct service to migrants where such services were not available from affiliated agencies.

The extension of the role has resulted in an increase and redeployment of Council Staff, as well as the opening of regional offices in areas of high migrant density.