

# BROADMEADOWS

## - planned for housing, not living

'All the kids were always in and out of trouble. Nothing to do, nowhere to go. Before the Club started, if I went out to my weekly game of bowls, I never knew what I'd be coming home to'.

'Since we've had the Club, we've had no trouble whatsoever with any of the kids. Most of them have got themselves jobs and they are staying in them. It's been real good.'

Mrs Margaret Allan was talking about the boys' club which she and a group of neighbours have started in Broadmeadows. It is not pretentious. An ordinary iron garage in Mrs Allan's back garden with a concrete floor and a gap around the bottom for ventilation, but it suits the boys. They can go out there and play billiards or hookey and they are not disturbing anyone. They don't have to worry about

spilling things on the carpet. There is a power point to plug in a cassette player and the scores chalked up on the walls act as a record for the number of games that have been won and lost since the Club came into being in June last year.

The Club is a result of the work of Albert van Moorst, a youth worker with many years' experience, whom the Brotherhood appointed at the end of 1971 to help develop local leadership in the area.

For Albert, after many years of working in the inner suburbs, the idea of working in a

growing outer suburb was exciting. A firm believer that welfare must be dispersed and received by the community itself, Albert and his wife, Liz, moved out to Broadmeadows to live in a house provided by the Housing Commission.

'Broadmeadows, which was built in a short period of time, was planned for housing, not for living. They forgot about welfare, about recreational facilities and many other things,' says Albert. 'When you work with a family, you discover that there are so many unmet needs which directly affect them. The development and improvement of a family's position will often depend on the development of the total community. The dilemma with limited resources is where to concentrate your effort'.

'So far, Albert has been directing his effort towards assisting the group of families, of which Mrs Allan is a member, to become involved in the leisure activities of their own young people.

### OUTINGS FOR FAMILIES

As well as the Club, he has helped the families organise picnics and taken groups of boys on weekend camps. A mammoth family outing when 55 people covering four generations went to Hanging Rock for the day was a fantastic success.

As a result of all these activities and the time he is able to spend with the families in their homes, Albert feels that they are now much more settled as a group.

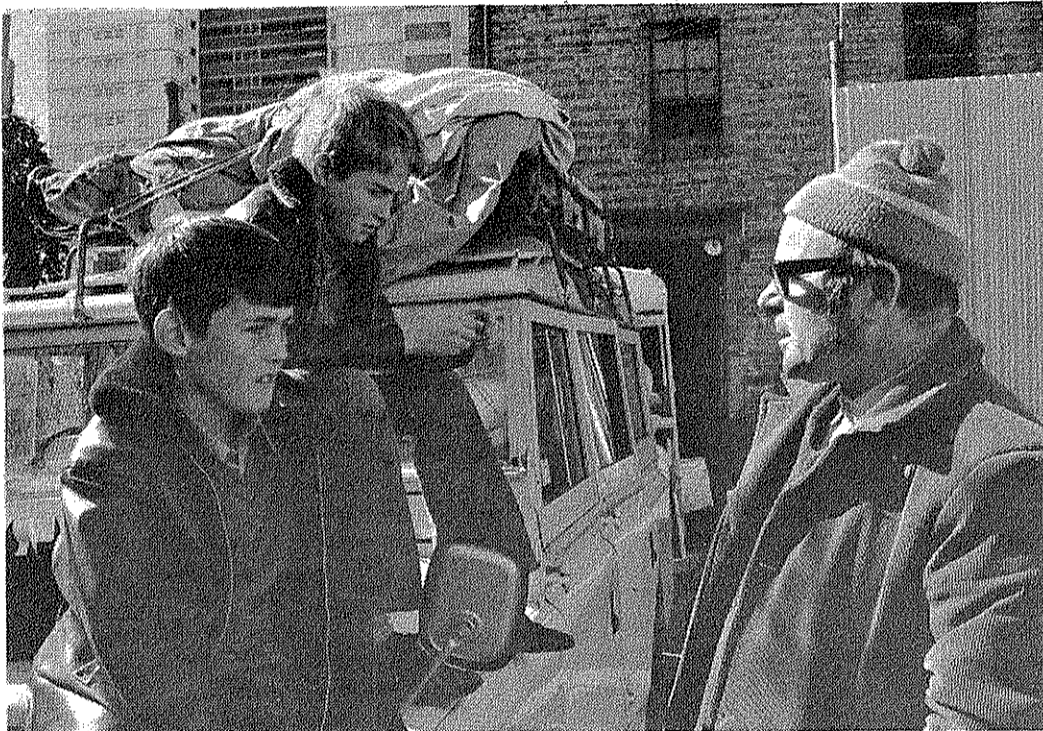
Albert has also found time to become thoroughly involved in general community development. As a member of the Broadmeadows' Welfare and Advisory Council, he is helping with the family welfare and emergency accommodation. He is also involved in training probation officers, the development of a local youth advisory council and a member of the Progress Association and a Parks and Gardens Committee.

'What we have to do now,' he says, 'is decide in what role I will be of most use to families in Broadmeadows. This group of families will soon be able to take the Club over completely and run it themselves. Should we form more groups or concentrate on more general community development?'

Joe Morris, the Youth Liaison Officer for the Broadmeadows Council, points out that there are probably almost 4000 young people living in the area aged between five and 22 years. Local leadership has not been developed in the area. There is also a great lack of facilities. Broadmeadows has no old church halls, factories or shops lying empty that can be utilised as there are in older suburbs.

'Albert and I have a good relationship,' he says. 'I'm a resource person for him and he's a resource person for me. Albert understands people and they recognise this and accept him as a friend. You could say that he acts as a catalyst in the area making people aware of the situation, seeking justice for people and giving them the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. He is trying to get people to work together in a common cause whatever their beliefs or ideology, training or background.'

There is no doubt in Margaret Allan's mind that whatever his role, Albert must not leave Broadmeadows. 'It all works because of Albert,' she says. 'We'll get up a petition if they try to move him. Everybody knows him and everybody likes him. The kids even have a pet name for him - "Dutch Jug".'



Albert van Moorst discusses plans with a couple of camping enthusiasts before setting off on a mobile adventure camp.

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