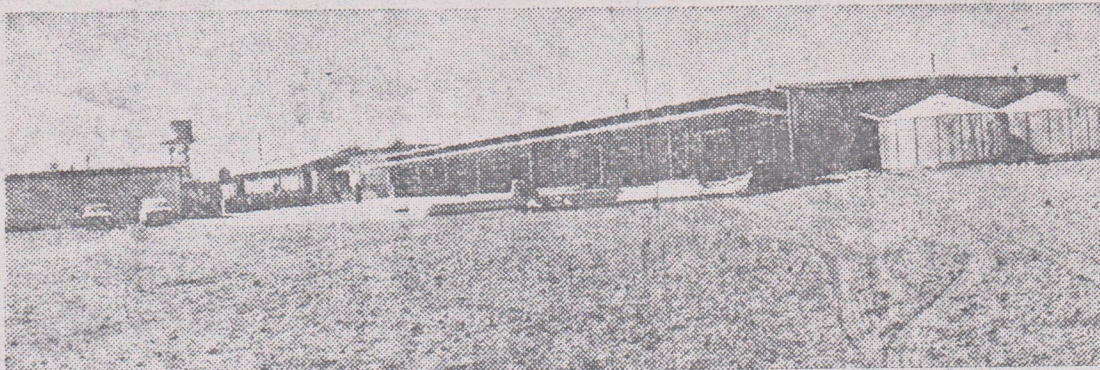


# New school's in at Coober

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Children at Coober Pedy went to "school" in an unfinished hall, sat on boxes and used packing crates for desks.

The Acting Director-General of Education, Mr. Les Dodd, ended that yesterday when he opened a \$350,000, carpeted, air-conditioned, new school (pictured).

The first school, opened in 1960, had only 21 children.

The new Coober Pedy Area school has an enrolment of more than 350.

It has a kindergarten, primary school, and secondary school for white, Aboriginal, and migrant children.

The school has a staff of 15, including the headmaster and deputy head. Next year it will gain two teacher aides, and a fourth year class.

And it may soon have a swimming pool.

The local Progress Association recently raised \$2,400 towards building a pool for what Mr. Dodd described as the most isolated and driest school in the world.

## SOON OUTGROWN

Some Coober Pedy people are puzzled.

Their new school, opened about a month ago, is already too small for its school-going population.

They can blame the lure of the opal fields — and a consequent dramatic drift of families into the town.

The Education Department says this is not unusual in mining towns.

Planned more than two years ago on the then projected figures, the school has just been outgrown.

Originally it was to cater for 116 primary and 20 secondary pupils.

Figures recorded last month show a roll of 99 infant, 149 primary and 49 secondary students.

The department has made available a couple of rooms from the old school to take up the overflow.

It also plans to keep an eye on things . . . to see whether there is any drop in roll numbers towards the end of the year.

And there may well be . . . rumor has it that gougers are having a pretty lean time. *August 1972*