

Aboriginals find hope in China

PEKING, Sun., AAP. — China had bad slums but its people did not lack hope and the children were not underfed, Mr Garry Foley said today.

"These are the main differences between them and the Australian aboriginals," said Mr Foley, leader of an aboriginal delegation visiting China.

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Mr Foley sat in a lounge room at the Peking Hotel, explaining why the second aboriginal group to visit China was impressed with what it had seen.

"They've got some of the worst slums I've seen but the people don't look hopeless — that's the difference," he said.

"People say you don't see anything in a guided tour but you see things in between. If you keep your eyes open and your mouth shut you see the lot.

"One thing we notice particularly — you never see an underfed kid."

"That's right — all the kids look marvellous," said Miss Evelyn Scott, deputy leader of the delegation and a leader of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

They were impressed particularly with communes, the children's and workers' cultural palaces

of Shanghai and the treatment of minority groups.

The delegation, which has been in China about 10 days, visited Shanghai, Wusih and Nanking before arriving in Peking last night.

Its members are spending five weeks in China as guests of the Chinese Association of Friendship with Foreign Peoples.

The first aboriginal delegation to China came in 1972.

Mr Foley said the aim of the delegation was to promote friendship between the Chinese and aboriginal people.

Delegation members looked colorful as they arrived in Peking dressed in padded blue Chinese clothes. The men had long, curly beards and wore blue workers' caps.

'Impressive' **commune**

Mr Foley said the delegation had been impressed with a commune outside Shanghai.

The former race relations officer at Monash University said the commune idea could be applied to aboriginal communities.

He had been interested in this idea and believed communes could be applied to reserves in New South Wales and Queensland when the land rights question was settled.

Communes could be based on the socialist nature of aboriginal society in a detribalised urban set-up.

Asked why they had been impressed with the communes they had visited, Mr Foley said: "Every person in the commune is utilised in one way or another and is producing something."

"We also think it provides the kind of basis in which aboriginals could retain their identity and in which traditional aboriginal culture could be taught."

He said he thought reserves in Queensland could be converted to communes very quickly.

"We wouldn't follow to the letter what goes on here but the Chinese can certainly teach us a lot," Mr Foley said.