



THE OUTBACK GETS A FAIR DEAL AT LAST

By John Quinn

THERE is a slab of the real Australia, as good and satisfying as a slice of well-cooked damper, in 5CL's new Sunday evening serial "The Sundowners."

The story is an adaptation of Jon Cleary's novel of the outback and it looks like being one of the best things in serials (non-mystery) that the ABC has had for quite some time.

The characters come to vivid life from the time they spoke their opening lines and what a lively crew they are—Paddy Carmody, the incurable roamer whose tent is his home, who desires to own nothing more than the horse and cart that takes him from one end of the country to the other; his wife, Ida, yearning for a place of her own; the happy boy, Sean; the cynical remittance man, Rupert Venneker.

You recognise them as soon as you hear them. If you have been in the bush you have met them all a dozen times.

And what a change it is to hear a serial that does not caricature the people of the bush, making them so many Dads and Daves, or set their lives in the stark aridity of a Drysdale painting.

Admittedly Paddy Carmody is a poverty-stricken drifter, admittedly he could be something better for he is no fool—but he happens to like his roaming life, as hundreds of men do.

And his wife, while not happy about it, is no figure of frustration. Paddy is her man and she intends to stand by him. The last thing in the world they want is pity.

The story has all the heat and dust of the outback—and all the beauty of it that binds the small landholder to his farm and the drover to his endless road.

And it has the drama, too. The first episode ended with Carmody and Venneker in danger of being trapped by a bushfire. When you get realism plus action; plus masterly writing a serial must be good.

"The Sundowners" is.



THE CARMODY family in "The Sundowners," broadcast each Sunday at 8 p.m. from 5CL. From left: Sean (Ray Hartley), Ida (Sheila Sewell), and Paddy (Rodney Taylor).