



Successful candidates and their wives at the declaration of the poll for the N.A.C.C. election, National Library, Canberra, 13th December, 1973

## N.A.C.C. TAKES OFFICE

**Elections for the first National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (N.A.C.C.) have been completed.**

**The 41 successful candidates have already had two meetings in Canberra and are currently at work in their electorates.**

The N.A.C.C. is the official link between the Aboriginal people and the Australian Government. It is the elected voice of the people, advising the Minister and the Department on the policy and administration of all matters affecting Aborigines.

It will meet in Canberra two or three times each year, apart from sub-committee meetings. Its members are paid a \$6,000 annual salary plus \$2,000 allowances for city representatives and \$3,000 for country members. Elections will be held every two years.

Altogether 193 candidates, 167 men and 26 women, nominated for the elections. Prior to polling day, November 24, 37,000 Aborigines and Islanders had enrolled to vote, about 75 per cent of the estimated adult population. Overall 80 per cent of those enrolled did vote.

In New South Wales 75 per cent (4,328) of those enrolled (5,710) voted. Thirty-eight people nominated for the 8 electorates and the successful candidates were: Messrs Tom Williams (Sydney), Phillip Hall (Sydney), Keith Smith (Mogo), Rex Marshall (Armidale), Leonard Brown (Grafton), Harry Hall (Walgett), Ray Nagas (Broken Hill), and Mrs Valmai Mackay (Narrandera). (The actual voting figures in each electorate are published on page 10.)

Tom Williams and Harry Hall were also successful candidates in the elections for the N.S.W.

Aborigines Advisory Council and Aboriginal Lands Trust. Phillip Hall is the youngest member of the N.A.C.C. Mrs Mackay is one of only 2 women elected.

The percentage of people who voted in each State compares more than favourably with the percentage of people who voted in the first non-compulsory State Government elections held in Australia.

Compared with New South Wales' 8 members on the N.A.C.C., Queensland (including Torres Strait) has 9, the Northern Territory and Western Australia each have 8, South Australia 4, Victoria 3, and Tasmania 1. Seven of the eight Northern Territory representatives are tribal people.

The results of the election were officially declared at the National Library, Canberra, on Thursday, December 13. Most of the successful candidates attended the ceremony, which was addressed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, and the Secretary of the Department, Mr Barrie Dexter. Also in attendance were Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls, Mr Charles Perkins, Mr Gordon Bryant, N.A.C.C. officials, and parliamentarians.

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, addressed a special luncheon held for those attending the ceremony and met many of the N.A.C.C. members. (His address is reprinted on page 8.)

A statement issued by the N.A.C.C. after its first meeting, criticized the press for misreporting its deliberations, and stressed that "This is the first time since the arrival of Europeans in Australia that Aborigines and Islanders have been democratically elected by their peers to represent them at a national level".