

Doug's Bupumumus

Pastor Doug Nicholls was crowned with a dibal, and invested as Bupumumus, the highest honor bestowed by the aboriginal people of Australia and the Torres Straits Islands.

The ceremony, which took place on Saturday, at the Aborigines Advancement League Centre in Cunningham St., Northcote, was witnessed by one of the biggest gatherings of Australian aborigines and islanders.

A dibal — Pastor Nicholls is wearing his in the picture on the right — is a head-piece worn only by the head chief.

Aborigines from five states and the Northern Territory attended the first National Tribal Council of Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines.

The meeting got away with a 20th century-style rights march.

Soon afterwards the 300 or more aborigines and representatives of white aboriginal advancement organisations sat down to business.

Pastor Nicholls, 64, was also presented with a necklace, spear and woomera.

The necklace, known as a Divi Divi, was given to him by the Torres Strait Islanders. The necklace has a shell in the centre which represents a heart.

The spear is called a Gaba Gaba, and is a baton-like instrument. When the chief draws it from his belt it is time for battle.

Pastor Nicholls is a foundation member of the Advancement League and its co-director.

In the early '30s, he was a champion wingman for Fitzroy Football Club, and also played football with Northcote in the VFA.

