

# Aboriginal body called apartheid

A NATIONAL consultative aboriginal body which the Federal Government is setting up was called apartheid by Senator Bonner yesterday.

The organisation, to be called the National Aboriginal Congress, will have only aboriginal members.

They will be elected by aborigines, and an electoral roll of aborigines in each State is being compiled.

"To me, it's apartheid if only aborigines are going to be allowed to be candidates and voters," said Senator Bonner.

"I want to see aborigines elected to positions of responsibility, but where they're dealing with all sections of the community and not just their own race."

He said there was a danger that the proposal would isolate aborigines from the rest of the Australian community.

## Consult

"There's a need for consultation on aboriginal affairs, as in all other areas," he said.

"But where you have an electorate with only aborigines in it, this takes them out of the political arena."

"They'd have less power than now because they'd tend to relate only to aboriginal affairs instead of being part of the whole community."

Under the scheme, all States are being split up into "aboriginal" electorates.

Queensland, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia will each have six of them, South Australia five, and Victoria four.

## Full-time

The new body's headquarters will be in Canberra.

It will have a full-time president, and all elected members will receive salary and expenses.

Eighteen-year-olds and over will be able to vote in the election.

Initial plans were that this would be held in September.

Senator Bonner said he

would not be one of the candidates.

He would not be able to give sufficient time to the job, and in any case he was not happy about the scheme.

He said it was a tremendously expensive way of obtaining aboriginal advice for the Aboriginal Affairs Minister (Mr. Bryant).

People first had to be employed to go around and enrol aborigines entitled to vote.

"I don't know how many members will be

returned from each electorate," he said.

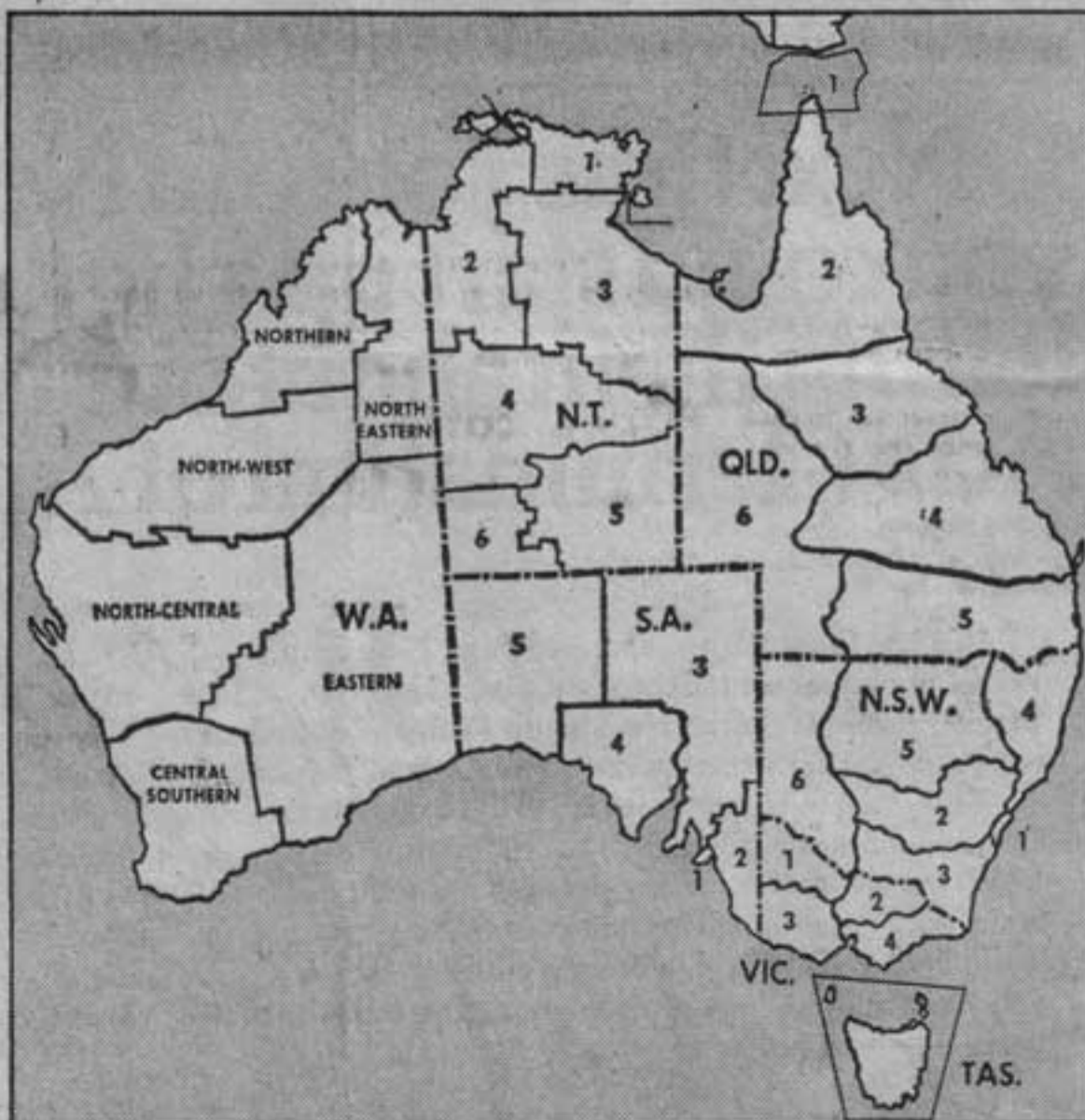
"But if the plan is for two from each we could have 72 people fully employed just to be consultants to Mr. Bryant."

A conference convened by Mr. Bryant in Canberra to discuss the role and structure of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee carried a motion that the Federal Government should legislate to allow aborigines in their respective States to elect at least two representatives to the Federal Parliament.

Senator Bonner said he wasn't completely in agreement with this motion. But it would be far more effective than the aboriginal congress if such a scheme was introduced.

He thought Mr. Bryant was setting up the congress as a means of turning the aborigines off their idea of having their own representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

He also thought some aborigines had mistaken ideas about the powers the congress would have.



MAP shows how the country will be divided into electorates for the proposed National Aboriginal Consultative Committee.