

# Black voices

AUSTRALIA'S NEWLY ELECTED Aboriginal "parliament" has risen and its 41 members have scattered into their vast electorates for their first taste of life as elected representatives, gathering information for their next meeting on January 21. The NSW co-ordinator for the elections, Mr Michael Anderson, says our eight State representatives embody a thoroughly representative cross-section of present attitudes among Aborigines. But who are they?

The youngest, 25-year-old Phillip Hall, won potentially the most volatile of the electorates, inner Sydney. Mr Hall has been working for the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs for eight years. He came to live in Sydney (Campsie at the moment) from Walgett, where his father, Mr Harry Hall, is manager of the foundation. Mr Hall, snr, 49, was elected NACC member for the State's central and south-west. He took part in the bitter campaign by Aboriginal cotton workers for better pay and conditions around Wee Waa last year.

Mrs Valmai McKay, wife of a Narrandera railway worker, and one of only two women elected to the "parliament," represents Murrumbidgee. She has worked as a "loner" in fights for Aboriginal causes rather than in association with organisations.

Outer Sydney, including La Perouse, Mt Druitt and Green Valley, was won by Mr Tom Williams, 51, formerly public relations officer of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs and recently permanent welfare officer of the Aboriginal Prisoners Aid Association. He is an authority on metropolitan Aborigines' problems.

Mr Williams, who in his youth knew the misery of having no home, now lives at La Perouse. "Housing is the major problem the committee will have to tackle," he said. "Then, unemployment — especially in the rural divisions. In Sydney, you don't starve — but out bush there is often just no work to be found."

The other NSW representatives are: **Far South Coast**, Mr Keith Smith, 39, timber worker, of Mogo, who is the area field officer of the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service; **New England and Central Coast**, Mr Rex Marshall, 31, male nurse, of Armidale, whose electorate includes the sensitive Purfleet village near Taree; **North Coast**, Mr Leonard Brown, 43, leading hand with the local council at South Grafton; and **Far West**, Mr Ray Nagas, 33, carpenter and Torres Strait Islander, of Broken Hill.