

ROW OVER TRUGANINNI

A BATTLE is raging against authority in Tasmania to have the remains of the island's last aboriginal, Truganinni, decently buried.

The first blast in the fight came earlier this month when Mr Harry Penrith, an aboriginal law student, at the University of Tasmania, demanded the burial of the remains.

Truganinni died in 1876 aged about 73. Her bones are still available at the museum for scientific research.)

Since Mr Penrith's attack, a descendant of Truganinni has joined the battle.

DISGRACE

She is the great granddaughter of the last aboriginal, Mrs C.L. McKay of Prospect Vale, a Launceston suburb, who said:

"It's a national disgrace that Truganinni's skeleton is in the Hobart Museum.

"Her last wishes should be respected. She should be laid to rest in the waters of D'Entrecasteaux Channel, off Bruny Island, because that's what she wanted.

"Enough has been

done to our race without this last humiliation".

Mrs McKay explained that her great grandmother had married an Englishman named Smith in Hobart and that the family came from there.

From the day Truganinni died, on May 8, 1876, her remains have caused trouble. Three days after her death the Council of the Royal Society asked for the body "for the purpose of preserving the remains in such a manner as may seem best in the interests of science and the colony".

The request was at first refused and she was buried in the Cascades Jail reformatory grounds.

But the body was later disinterred and the bones displayed in a glass case in the Hobart Museum.

About 12 years ago, the skeleton was moved to the museum's basement, to be kept for scientific research.