

Dexter puts Perkins on 'special duty'

CANBERRA. — Aboriginal public servant Mr. Charles Perkins has been removed from his position as head of the consultation and liaison branch of the Aboriginal Affairs Department.

The head of the department (Mr. Barrie Dexter) said last night Mr. Perkins, an assistant secretary, had been put on "special duties".

"These duties comprise completing a lot of work which he hasn't completed before," Mr. Dexter said.

One of these tasks was to prepare a report on his recent trip overseas to study race relations.

Mr. Perkins' removal as head of the branch follows numerous conflicts he has had with both the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Senator Cavanagh) and Mr. Dexter.

He has said he will charge Mr. Dexter with "racist" behavior.

After Mr. Perkins' outburst against Mr. Dexter, Senator Cavanagh said Mr. Perkins' position would have to be reviewed.

Mr. Dexter said he took his decision to transfer Mr. Perkins to special duties — which carries the same salary and status — after Mr. Perkins had announced he wanted to take a year's leave of absence next year.

"I wanted those reports finished before he went," Mr. Dexter said.

In MELBOURNE yesterday Mr. Perkins said he believed he had been removed because Mr. Dexter wanted to isolate him from Aboriginal affairs.

"I have now been placed on 'special duties', whatever that means", Mr. Perkins said.

"As far as I'm concerned I'm now floating around in limbo, Dexter has tried to isolate me".

Mr. Perkins and 10 Victorian Aboriginal organisations have called for Mr. Dexter's immediate dismissal.

"Dexter is proving to be a disaster and a liability as far as the Aboriginal people are concerned", Mr. Perkins said.

He said Mr. Dexter's removal not only would benefit Aborigines, but improve race relations in Australia.

Mr. Perkins said he believed Mr. Dexter had set out to undermine the National Aboriginal Congress.