

NATIVE POLL COST \$350,000

CANBERRA. — It cost about \$350,000 to prepare electoral rolls for the election of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee.

The chief returning officer, Mr Neville Burke, told the NACC this today.

Last year 41 members were elected to the NACC.

Mr Burke said that the financial implications of the election had been a "disaster area." Some officials had to wait up to five months to be paid.

He said: "It was reported by one co-ordinator that the carelessness of one airline resulted in the loss of election material despatched to a polling place."

A light aircraft had to be chartered to deliver substitute material, he said.

Mr Burke said the election had shown a number of weaknesses.

Not enough time had been given to make full arrangements, he said.

He criticised the "couldn't care less" attitude and the "extreme carelessness" of one of two airlines in Queensland and the Northern Territory which carried ballot boxes and election material.

He said the service from the airline was "deplorable."

He said that the election had been conducted only on "broad guidelines"

and that rules and definitions were "conspicuous by their absence."

He urged that planning begin now for the next election for the NACC due next year.

The NACC agreed to set up a sub-committee to co-operate with Mr Burke in organising future elections.

Mr Burke suggested three-man "identification tribunals" to determine if people wanting to vote in the elections were eligible.

"If rolls are not compiled there would be a large reduction in expenditure, time and effort, he said.

"It would also meet with the approval of those aboriginal people who desire to vote at NACC elections but who, for private and personal reasons, do not wish to have their names recorded on an electoral roll."

Mr Burke also recommended that candidates in future NACC elections should be given money to help them in their campaigning.

"Candidates in large electorates I felt were at a great disadvantage because of the area it was necessary to travel to canvass votes.