Aborigines seek wide power

CANBERRA: The National Aboriginal Consultative Committee moved yesterday to gain far-reaching control of Aboriginal affairs.

It sought power over the creation of policy, expenditure, natural resources and the right to make laws affecting Aborigines.

The NACC called for these extensive powers in the constitution it has proposed for a national Aboriginal congress. The proposed constitution was released yesterday.

Under the constitution, much of the control would remain in the hands of the NAC's nine-man council of ministers.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, will discuss the constitution today at a meeting of the NACC in Canberra.

He is certain to oppose major sections of the constitution and urge the committee to amend them

Senator Cavanagh has opposed previous moves by the committee to assume executive status.

He was to have discussed the issue yesterday but was called away to attend urgent talks in Sydney on an application by Queensland Mines Ltd to mine uranium on an Aboriginal reserve at Nabarlek, in the Northern Territory.

But before he left Senator Cavanagh made it clear he was opposed to the committee's holding a dual role—a consultative committee advising the Government as well as an executive body with some degree of financial independence.

On February 5 the NACC voted to change its name to the national Aboriginal congress and to assume executive status.

However, when Senator Cavanagh said he had no power to pay such a body and threatened to withold the $6000 salary which each member receives, the committee agreed to continue in its consultative role while work on the constitution was completed.

Senator Cavanagh told the committee yesterday that Aboriginal children in outback areas should not be taught in English —"a language foreign to them"—but that Aboriginal children in cities and in towns like Alice Springs should not have segregation in education.

His department was investigating the question of providing Aboriginal nurses in missions.