

ABORIGINAL LEADER IN EQUALITY PLEA

RACIAL discrimination against aboriginals still existed in Australia, Mrs Faith Bandler told a Melbourne University Abschol meeting yesterday.

In many cases the discrimination was coming from uneducated European Australians, Mrs Bandler said.

Abschol is a Melbourne University group that aims to provide scholarships to enable aboriginals to continue to secondary and tertiary education levels.

Mrs Bandler is the director of the NSW vote "Yes" for Aboriginal Rights Committee, and the NSW State secretary for the Federal Council

for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

She said she had been thrown out of a Cairns hotel because of her color.

She is not an aboriginal herself, but is a Melanesian from the New Hebrides, and has lived in Australia most of her life.

She said that in Sydney, aboriginals were still being refused service in hotels.

"It does not matter whether they are educated or not, it is done for no other reason than the color of their skin," she said.

"It appears business people are afraid of losing other customers."

Aboriginals were not asking to be "accepted" into the white society and were not asking for "tolerance" she said.

What they wanted was complete social and political equality.

The May 27 referendum on aboriginal rights was needed as aboriginals were not in the census and lived under six different laws in Australian States.

A "Yes" vote would end buck-passing of aboriginal problems from the State Governments to the Federal Government, and from State to State, Mrs Bandler said.

She described the "vicious circle" that aboriginals lived in.

"An aboriginal can't get a house because he can't get a job," she said.

"He can't get a job because he can't get an education."

"And how can he be expected to get an education and a job if he hasn't got a house to live in?"



← MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY

student Robert Oke, 22, pins an Abschol badge on Lionel Bandler, 12, watched by her mother, Mrs Faith Bandler. Robert is local director for Abschol, the movement to get university education for aboriginals.