

ALP HITS LAKE TYERS AGREEMENT

THE State Government's Lake Tyers settlement scheme was a perversion of the concept of aboriginal land rights, Labor MLA Mr D. L. F. Bornstein said yesterday.

He said giving the settlement to an aboriginal trust might precipitate a major setback to the aboriginal cause in Victoria.

The Government scheme was a more far-reaching acknowledgment of aboriginal land rights than had ever been made elsewhere in Australia, he said.

But the restricted nature of the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust had already caused unnecessarily deep and bitter divi-

sions among aboriginals in the Gippsland area.

"It has also increased the fear that the settlement will be quickly sold to wealthy business interests using high-pressure tactics on the relatively few adult residents who remain," said Mr Bornstein, the ALP spokesman on aboriginal affairs.

"The ALP cannot support the contention that only a hand-picked minority of the aboriginals whose heritage is so closely linked to Lake Tyers should be the sole determinants of its future.

"If the Government's aim is to assist only the current residents of the

Lake Tyers settlement it can do so with more justice by granting those aboriginals perpetual title of the land with the right of leasehold on generous terms.

"But freehold should be excluded."

The Opposition would not accept vesting of ownership solely in aboriginal residents who had successfully resisted the Government's "varied inducements" over the years to shift them from Lake Tyers.

"The dispossessed people have just as much right to a share in Lake Tyers settlement as do the present residents selected as members of the Trust," he said.