

Aboriginal health

Ruddock report

Improvements of the physical environment in which Aborigines live and their involvement in all stages of health-care services were the major two thrusts of a report tabled yesterday.

The report on Aboriginal health was made by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

The chairman, Mr Ruddock (Lib, NSW) said the standard of Aborigines' health was far lower than that of the majority of Australians.

It would not be tolerated if it existed in the Australian community as a whole.

"The level of Aboriginal ill-health will only be reduced if there are dramatic improvements in the physical environment, if there is maximum participation by Aborigines in all stages of the planning and delivery of health care", he said.

It recommends the highest priority be given and immediate action taken to provide clean and adequate water supplies to all Aboriginal communities, an upgrading of housing for Aborigines



Dr Everingham

native health-care services before Aborigines.

An inquiry should be held into the implementation of the policy of self-determination as it affected community development.

Other proposals deal with Aboriginal cultural beliefs and practices which affect their health, maintenance of a full range of health-care programs and health training and employment of Aborigines.

The Opposition spokesman on Aboriginal affairs, Dr Everingham, a member of the committee, said he hoped the report would be acted on more quickly than previous similar reports.

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Mr Ruddock

living in and near towns and development of effective consultation processes between Federal and State departments and local authorities.

An advisory group should be set up in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to do research on community and household facilities, consult and advise Aborigines on needs and facilities and monitor results.

An independent evaluation would consider the effectiveness of all Aboriginal health services and programs and try to standardise information.

A task force should be established to place the full range of alter-