

12 July 1980

Age

## Aboriginal week 'making up'

By DAMIEN MURPHY

Black activist Gary Foley thinks of National Aboriginal Week as a sort of Italian Week with didgeridoos.

He knows they chose an Aboriginal "princess" as part of the activities of the past week. He knows the young Melbourne blacks had a disco night and the elders had tribal dancing.

But Mr Foley also knows that unemployment among his people in Victoria runs at 54.5 per cent. And he knows that if you are a black man in this State your life expectancy is a meagre 42.

"National Aboriginal Week . . . it's nothing but 'buy a boong a beer week'," Mr Foley said.

"It's making up for the things that haven't happened in the 12 months since the previous National Aboriginal Week."

Mr Foley is a well-known black activist. He is also director of the Aboriginal Health Service in Fitzroy.

He said the main thrust of National Aboriginal Week was land rights. Too many non-Aboriginal community groups and individuals were involved in formulating the week's activities.

"Any minority group can hold a celebration about their identity," Mr Foley said, "but unless Aborigines get land rights it is just a waste of time celebrating anything."

He said land rights would allow Aborigines to pursue their own development free of the constraints of white society—materialism, individualism, capitalism and the nuclear family.