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## Mansell group held up in passport hitch

By ROD FRAIL,  
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Members of an Aboriginal delegation to Libya, led by Mr Michael Mansell, were held by Immigration officials for almost two hours at Sydney Airport yesterday when they tried to use "Aboriginal" passports to get back into the country.

A spokesman for the Immigration Department, Mr Gordon Benjamin, said officers were obliged by law to detain anyone who arrived without a proper passport.

Mr Mansell and four other Aborigines arrived on a Lufthansa flight just after 6 am and went through Customs, where they declined to show Australian passports and were referred to Immigration.

Mr Benjamin said alternative identification was sought from people who had lost passports.

"Michael Mansell is a well-known figure and our staff had no trouble in identifying him," Mr Benjamin said.

"His four colleagues were questioned in an amicable way about who they were and a computer check showed they had been issued with legitimate passports.

"The last of them was cleared at about 8.15."

Mr Mansell said last night it was



*Mr Mansell: denied trip was a failure.*

disappointing that the people who had invaded this country were using force to ensure Aboriginal status as a nation was not recognised.

The delegation failed to meet the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, and secure trade sanctions against Australia. But Mr Mansell denied the trip was a failure.

"It would have been nice, of course, to speak to the leader of the country but circumstances just prevented that," he said.

"I think that the success of the trip overseas has opened up a whole new era of the Aboriginal movement which includes, of course, future trips of Aborigines to Libya."