

Mansell quiet on Libya trip details

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Mr Michael Mansell, the Aboriginal activist, refused to say last night who would pay for a visit to Libya by a delegation of 14, including himself.

He also declined to say who was organising the trip, but confirmed that the delegation was visiting Libya at the Libyan Government's invitation and would meet Libya's leader, Colonel Gaddafi.

Mr Mansell said sanctions against Australia, Aboriginal links with other countries and Libyan help in the United Nations would be discussed with Colonel Gaddafi and other Libyan officials.

He said the delegation, which included 12 Aborigines from all states and two Maoris, did not represent Aboriginal groups. He declined to name the members.

Mr Mansell, a solicitor and the legal adviser to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, visited Libya for the first time last year. Since then, he has repeatedly raised the possibility of returning to Libya to



Mr Mansell: Talking about trade sanctions.

seek financial aid for Aborigines and draw attention to their plight. Last night, he said he expected to find out today when the group would leave, but he expected it to be within seven days.

He said the invitation came from the Libyan Government "and I'm arranging the Aboriginal delegation. I won't say who is paying for it". He said he would take leave from his job with the centre. Last time, his trip led the Aboriginal Affairs Department to order an audit of the centre.

He said he expected to spend eight days talking to officials in Libya. "We'll be talking about trade sanctions, second, Aboriginal links with other countries, and number three, what Libya might do in the United Nations."

Mr Mansell has said he would ask Libya to ban live-sheep imports from Australia to bring conditions for Aborigines in Australia to the attention of other countries.

According to the Sheepmeat Council of Australia, there have been no live-sheep exports to Libya for at least five months, and none are planned. The council's executive director, Mr David Coombes, is reported to have said that the Libyan market was a bonus because of its uncertainties.