

## **Pearson rallies vote for Democrats**

*Australian* - Monday, September 14, 1998

Author: CHRISTOPHER DORE

ABORIGINAL leader Noel Pearson yesterday urged people to vote for the Democrats in the Senate to rid Australia of the "scourge of racism". Mr Pearson warned it was "absolutely imperative" that the Democrats were "in charge of the wheel" and held the balance of power in the Senate after the election, not One Nation.

The former Cape York Land Council head, who has been courted by former prime minister Paul Keating to run for the Labor Party, made the impassioned plea in campaigning for his close friend and Democrat Senate candidate in the ACT Rick Farley.

"Australians of all political colours -whether you're from the Left of the spectrum or Right of the spectrum -all liberal-minded and fair-minded people should understand that if the scourge of racism is going to be left behind we have to vote for the Democrats in the Senate," he said.

Mr Pearson and Mr Farley, as a former head of the National Farmers Federation, were involved in the passage of the original native title legislation.

Mr Pearson, who attacked One Nation for more "black bashing" with its Aboriginal policy launched last week in Longreach, also took a swipe at the Coalition yesterday over its expected changes to indigenous policy.

"I am concerned about it because the line both from One Nation and unfortunately the Coalition is equality," he said. "Which white Australians want to be equal with black fellas?"

Mr Pearson said there was a stark choice in the Senate between the Democrats and One Nation holding the balance of power.

Mr Farley, who was a surprise recruit for the Democrats last week, has a strong chance of snatching the second ACT Senate position from the Liberal Party.