

Two resign from black study

By HELEN THOMAS, our Education Reporter

Two members of a Government committee assessing a course for black students at Swinburne College of Technology have resigned.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs yesterday admitted that one of the men resigned because he believed the committee was not prepared to be objective in its task.

The man is understood to be a noted Aboriginal writer and poet.

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The assessment team was appointed only two weeks ago, to look at the college's Community Organisation course, now mainly funded by the DAA.

It has been running for three years as a "pilot" scheme. But students and staff fear it won't be made permanent because neither the DAA or the college seems willing to foot the main bills.

Both say it is the other's responsibility to provide most of the funding.

The director of the DAA's (Victorian) south-eastern region, Mr. Reg Worthy, said yesterday that two members of the original five-man assessment team had resigned, shortly after assessment began.

"Two did resign, one because he felt he was not in a position to make a funding decision and the other because he believed we were not going to be objective, that it was a foregone conclusion," Mr. Worthy said.

He said he could not reveal their names.

But a tutor at the college, Mr. Gary Foley, said last night that the writer/poet had resigned from the assessment team because he felt there was too much "emotional bias" involved.

Mr. Foley is national secretary of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Union.

The student union has accused the DAA of trying to close down the course because it had made some Aboriginal students too "politically and socially conscious".

Mr. Worthy said that despite the resignations, an assessment report was expected to go to the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs by early November.

"This department has been asked by the college for money (to fund the course) and what my department is doing is assessing whether or not we should make this money available," he said.