

## Yanner to fight for Wild Rivers

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ABORIGINAL activist Murandoo Yanner is locking horns with high-profile Cape leader Noel Pearson as he launches a campaign to save Queensland's Wild Rivers legislation.

Mr Yanner will personally appeal to the three federal Independents to support the laws Opposition leader Tony Abbott wants scuttled.

Mr Yanner has directly challenged Mr Pearson's authority on the issue, saying indigenous Australia had had a gutfull of ``bourgeois Aborigines" claiming to represent their interests.

``There is a simmering resentment about Noel Pearson among Aboriginal Australians and it is slowly coming to the boil," Mr Yanner said yesterday.

``I'll be going down to Canberra to remind the Parliament there are Aborigines living north of the Tropic of Capricorn other than Noel Pearson."

Mr Pearson's campaign to overturn the laws prompted Mr Abbott to lodge a private member's Bill in Parliament last week aimed at crushing Wild Rivers.

Mr Abbott says the laws dis-empower Aboriginal people and lock up land which could be used for valuable economic opportunities.

But the Burketown-based Mr Yanner says his community which pioneered the laws more than five years ago sees them as a launch pad for lucrative, environmentally sustainable economic projects.

Wild Rivers which protect 10 river systems including the Lockhart, Ducie, Archer and Stewart allows for small business opportunities. Mr Yanner says Gulf Aborigines are examining a uranium mine as well as discussing with Tasmanian interests a large-scale forestry project.

``We're not saying we are building a uranium mine but we are looking at these sorts of things and you can under this legislation."

Mr Yanner says Wild Rivers legislation contained numerous hurdles for both projects and that Mr Pearson would destroy an environment many Indigenous people depended on for survival.

“We don't live in Cairns and go down to Coles for our food,” he said.

Independents Tony Windsor and Rob Oakeshott were unavailable for comment yesterday.

Fellow Independent and member for the north Queensland electorate of Kennedy Bob Katter says he has talked with Aboriginal people about Wild Rivers laws for years and would continue to do so.