

Native reserve 'not for ever'

The Lake Tyers Aboriginal reserve was not permanently set aside for Aboriginal purposes, the Director of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Worthy) said yesterday. The status of the reserve had been wrongly portrayed, he said.

He told a congregation at the Wesley Church PSA that the word "permanent" had a particular legal meaning that was set out fully in the Land Act.

"In May of 1965 the status of the land was

changed from temporary to a permanent reserve," he said.

"A permanent reserve may, however, by the same Parliament or any succeeding Parliament be disposed of at will.

"This, in fact, is what has happened to every other

Aboriginal reserve in the State of Victoria, the latest being Coranderrk, a former reserve near Healesville which was also "permanently" reserved but cut up and given either to soldier settlement or to the well-known Sir Colin McKenzie sanctuary."

When the Aboriginals Lands Act was introduced in 1970 it was stated that the right to sell land was inherent in any claims to real ownership, Mr. Worthy said.

For this reason the act enabled the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust to dispose of the property if there was a unanimous decision.

"It is therefore wrong with regard to land rights to offer partial ownership to land and deny the ultimate responsibility which attaches to ownership," he said.

"It is this aspect which made the act unique in Australian legislation."

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