

# Aborigines' vote seen as significant

By

Margaret Jones

The Aboriginal vote could affect the election result in four Federal seats, the editor of "Identity," Mr John Newfong, said yesterday.

The electorates were Leichhardt and Kennedy in Queensland, Gwydir in NSW, and the Northern Territory.

Mr Newfong said he believed that voter registration campaigns had not been thorough enough to ensure a record Aboriginal vote.

"Aborigines are still subject to pressures not to enrol," he said.

In some electorates, Aborigines were being organised to man the polling booths.

"If voters become accustomed to seeing Aborigines in the booths, they will eventually take more easily to the idea of voting for an Aboriginal candidate," Mr Newfong said.

Mr Newfong, a 28-year-old Queensland, has a long association with the Aboriginal advancement movement and has recently been chief spokesman for the Aboriginal Embassy in Canberra.

He has taken over the editorship of the national black publication "Identity."

The magazine, which is funded by the Council for the Arts and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, sells 10,000 copies.

The first issue under Mr Newfong's editorship has been completely re-designed and replanned. It has a strong urban flavour and is partly modelled on the black American magazines "Ebony" and "Jet."

The new look "Identity" contains a full page "It's



Mr Newfong

Time" ALP advertisement, some superb colour photographs of Aboriginal dancers, and a series of interviews with women called "Birds both black and beautiful."

The most important break with tradition, however, is the magazine's heavy political content in its new format.

As well as a feature on Black Power, "Identity" contains an 11-page cover of electoral issues, with an analysis of the policies of the major parties, as they relate to Aborigines.

Mr Newfong said it was the first time black Australians had been given a thorough run-down on parties and candidates before an election.

The magazine shows a strong scepticism towards all of the parties ("They're all there to look after the white man") but inclines — though without much enthusiasm — towards support of the ALP, on the grounds that "a Labor Government might be forced to offer marginal benefits that Aborigines cannot afford to ignore."