

26 January 1982

# Australia may become an outcast, says black activist

26 JAN 1982

Aboriginal protest action could make Australia "an international outcast, like South Africa" a prominent Aboriginal activist said yesterday.

Mr Gary Foley, the secretary of the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation, said diverse protest actions such as the Canberra "tent embassy", overseas delegations and disruption of sporting events had gained international attention for the condition of Aborigines in Australia and embarrassed the Government.

He said the disruption of the Alcoa athletics meeting in Melbourne recently was "excellent in terms of making people aware that the Aboriginal people are not going to sit back and cop it any more".

Calls for all Aboriginal protests to be made "through the proper channels" were useless because of Government inactivity in the area of Aboriginal affairs in the past 10 years, he said.

"If the Australian media cried as many self-righteous crocodile tears about the outrageous health and living conditions of Aboriginal people in Australia now as they did for two black American athletes who tripped over each other, then maybe Aboriginal people would not have to take action as was seen at the Alcoa games," he said.

Mr Foley said the disruption of the Melbourne meeting was "nothing" compared to what was being planned for the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in September. He emphasised that violence was not being planned against any athletes or spectators.

"Any violence will be initiated by the Queensland police," he said. "If the only language of the police is violence, in response to people exercising their legal, democratic right to protest, we will respond in kind. We just don't take it anymore. We will give them as good as they give us."

## Publicity

"The biggest thing we are planning for Brisbane is very peaceful but we know it will attract almost maximum publicity overseas."

He would give no details of the form the protest would take.

Today Aborigines will gather on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the erection of the original Aboriginal tent embassy.