I Thank the Senate for the debate that has taken place prior to my speaking. Before going into the debate, let me make a few brief remarks. During my lifetime I have always tried to follow the rule of law and I have counselled many of my young Aboriginal fellows that it is within the walls of this Parliament that the laws are made that govern the people of this nation. So I am very proud today to realise that there are people here who are prepared to allow me to speak to this motion today.

(Earlier, because of an ACT Supreme Court case due to be heard on 26 September and involving Aboriginal land rights, the Senate had debated whether it was a proper time to proceed with Senator Bonner's motion.)

Surely now my young Aboriginal fellows will understand what I have been saying for so long: It is within the walls of this Parliament that we can bring to the notice of the nation the problems with which we are faced. Perhaps between us all we can find a solution.

When I gave notice of this motion on 11 July 1974 I felt that it was quite appropriate as it was National Aborigines Week — a week supposedly set aside for the recognition of Aborigines, a week during which Aborigines were to celebrate. I ask you, Mr President and honourable Senators, to give us, the original owners of this land, something to celebrate by accepting this motion today. I do not decry the vast sums of money that have been spent by previous governments — and, I might add, increased by the present Government — on indigenous affairs. I do not deny that the present Government, in many areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, has instigated superbly beneficial schemes to improve my fellow Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' way of life within our broader Australian community. But it is truly to no avail, dignitywise, when it is but an allocating of money for a disadvantaged people because it is but a form of charity. We,

Photographs Above left: Senator Neville Bonner, the first and still the only Aboriginal member of the Commonwealth parliament, since 1971. He was born at Tweed Heads in northern New South Wales on 29 March 1918. He now represents Queensland, as a Liberal. *Department of Aboriginal Affairs*

Above right: Charles Perkins, Deputy Secretary, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, was the first Aboriginal to graduate from an Australian University, in 1964 from Sydney. His subjects were anthropology, political science, psychology and social theory. He was born on 16 June 1936 on the Aboriginal Reserve at Alice Springs. *Department of Aboriginal Affairs*

Below: Wenten Rubuntja, chairman of the Central Land Council in Alice Springs, addresses the Council at Amoongunya in February 1977, soon after the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act was proclaimed. With him is Ian Viner, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. *Brian Butler, c/- Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies*

This page is not shown as it contains photographs of Indigenous Australians