

Party of cowards says Ansell of ACT

Marika Hill

FORMER ad man for ACT John Ansell has branded it "a party of cowards" after he was forced to step down over his comments about Maori.

The former marketing manager says he is not a racist and that those who speak "the truth" - like sacked Employers and Manufacturers Association boss Alasdair Thompson - are punished.

An ACT ad campaign launched at the weekend has echoes of leader Don Brash's controversial Orewa speech in 2004. It was condemned yesterday by the Maori and Mana parties.

Mr Ansell said ACT should target male voters because women did not want to talk bluntly and were ruled by their emotions.

"We [ACT] are about talking bluntly and women don't want to talk bluntly. They just want to keep their relationships intact. It's far more important for them than improving society," he said.

Men ultimately deferred to the brain for hard decisions, while women looked to their emotions, he said.

Mr Ansell, who designed the Iwi/Kiwi billboards, was forced to quit at the weekend after leader Don Brash distanced himself from earlier remarks.

Mr Ansell had said Maori "have gone from the stone age to the space age in 150 years and haven't said thanks" after the party toned down newspapers ads he designed.

Not speaking out about the

"Maorification" of New Zealand" made them "a party of cowards", Mr Ansell said.

"They're such a bunch of lily-livered buggers," he said. "I'm glad I've brought this to the head. I don't have any regrets at all."

Mr Ansell said he was not racist, but had views about certain races.

"A racist is someone who despises someone of another culture and wants to wipe them out. The Hitlers," he said.

"Anything that is not supportive of this 'Maori are superior beings and must own everything' is condemned as racist."

Mr Ansell's original adverts asked: "Fed up with the Maorification of Everything?" and referred to "Apartheid Aotearoa".

The version that ran in the *Weekend Herald* read: "Fed up with pandering to Maori radicals?"

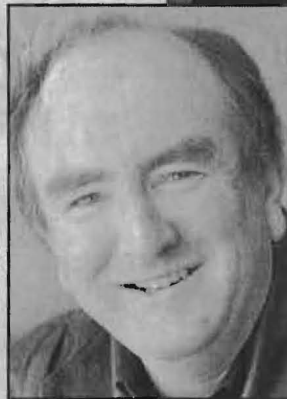
Dr Brash would not say if the party was embarrassed by Mr Ansell's comments.

However, he said they were "clearly inappropriate".

"I've made it clear that I don't share some of the views he expressed."

He would not comment on an "employment matter".

Maori party co-leader Pita Sharples wrote an open letter to



Keeping his distance: Don Brash said John Ansell's (inset) comments were clearly inappropriate. Photo: FAIRFAX

Dr Brash yesterday condemning the latest campaign. "Your views are not only inaccurate and ill-founded, but are totally out of tune with middle New Zealand's ideals and aspirations for our country," he said.

Mana Party leader Hone

Harawira said New Zealanders would not stand for "Maori bashing".

He said "redneck Brash" was attempting to boost support by riding on xenophobic fears.

"[Dr Brash is] a dinosaur who has no place in politics."

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