

**William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, 19 April 1939, National Archives of Australia, A461, A300/1, Part 3**

I am writing to you on the occasion of your selection of a cabinet to bring to your notice the great importance, from the point of view of my people, of the appointee to the Ministry for the Interior.

Mr Lyons' government has the credit of being the one which has done more for aboriginal uplift, either in promise or fulfilment, than has any other Government. I am glad to say that I communicated to him the gratitude of my people at a time he could appreciate it. I know he did. Mr Lyons has selected a sequence of Ministers for the Interior who have inspired confidence from the natives and the culmination has been found in the announced policy for aborigines. This has been good, mostly, and the parts we don't approve have been brought to notice in the hope that, when finally operative, the policy will make it possible for us to take our place as Australians.

A request such as the one I am to make would be deemed an impertinence from some people but it is a matter so fraught with moment to us that I feel we must mention the matter and I feel that you will accept the request in the spirit in which it is made. "Will you please select a minister for the Interior who will continue to maintain his administration with the desire to fully help the natives into full British culture"?

Mr Lyons has assured me that all his ministry shared his sympathy for my race. This includes yourself. I do trust that care for a suffering minority will ensure that kindness of treatment that will not allow Australia's minority problem to be as undesirable as the European minorities of which we read so much in the press.

Will you kindly make yourself conversant with the petition to His Majesty, now being held in the Office of the Prime Minister. It may be that you will be able to recommend some of the requests there made.