

William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, 5 October 1939, National Archives of Australia, A461, A300/1, Part 3

At the meeting of the League held last evening concern was expressed that the new Federal Policy for Aborigines, for which we have so long waited, was likely to have its implementation delayed, or at least curtailed, because of the need for all finance being made available for the prosecution of the war.

While we are most anxious, as our white fellow Australians are, to see the full resources of Australia marshalled for the prosecution of the war, we submit, that the last matter to suffer retrenchment is the good of the aboriginal cause, which is really a minority problem like, in some degree, the European matters which have caused the Empire to be at war. Those who are most needy and can suffer retrenchment less than any other portion of the population should not be called on only as a last resource.

May we have the honor of hearing that you will not permit of the implementation of our new deal being held up or delayed. Rather may we hope that all possible be done as soon as possible so that our suffering race may be more quickly brought to what is an aboriginal aspiration, viz:— “that the aboriginal problem be converted to the ABORIGINAL ASSET for the mutual good of White and Black in Australia”.

With thanks.