

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 a meeting of the league held last evening concern was felt at the fact that so many matters concerning aboriginal interests are either awaiting decision or have not yet reached that position. It was decided that you be asked to afford us the opportunity of meeting you as a deputation, when the following matters will be referred to:—

1. The petition to His Majesty, seeking representation in the Commonwealth Parliament for aborigines. As you will know, our Maori brothers have four members, including one minister of the Crown. Our request for one is, we feel, quite reasonable, more reasonable, we consider, than [i.e. than] representation should be afforded to the White population of the Northern Territory. Of course we understand that, if our request be granted, our member will not have a vote in matters before the House.
2. The New policy, "the Aboriginal Magna Carta", and its full implementation in the areas controlled by the Federal Parliament. Also the effect on the State Control of aborigines by the new policy. We have urged that the Federal Parliament should take over the State rights in this matter and we have been advised by certain State Administrations that they are not opposed to this.
3. Failing Federal control we have requested that a Federal Policy should be administered by the States, to be financed by the Federal Parliament on a percapita basis of the white population in the different States.
4. That provision be made for aborigines being qualified to receive community rights as Old Age and Invalid pensions, Maternity bonus and Franchise. At present aborigines are debarred from receiving what are rights of people of alien blood who are born in the land. Two men known by repute to you, but merely typical of others, who suffer this disability are David Uniapon and Douglas Nicholls. Aborigines whose income is within the range of taxability pay Income Tax and all other taxation.

Trusting that you will make it possible for us to meet you in deputation.