

William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, 13 January 1940, National Archives of Australia, A659, 1940/1/858

At a meeting of the League held on 10th inst., concern was felt for the delay in dealing with several requests before you and particularly the matter of the Old Age and Invalid pensions, Maternity Bonus and Franchise to natives of more than 50% aboriginal blood.

We feel that you must personally know that the poorest section in Australia is the aboriginal people and they can least of all wait for the relief which White Public opinion is prepared to accord us. Taking, as a case in point, the matter of Miss Ada Austin, the lady who is refused an old age pension because she is held to be more than 50% aboriginal. This woman is destitute, living on charity, including the aboriginal community, which is itself on the dole. This woman is suffering as no government or section of the people can agree is justified, but, because of the matter being deferred, she must suffer.

It was resolved that you be asked to at once deal with the outstanding matters and I request that you do.