

William Cooper to Mrs W.A. Norman, 21 August 1940, Norman Family Papers, Mortlock Library, State Library of South Australia, PRG 422/31

Your letter dated 4.8.40 reached me safely last night.

I am very pleased to note how interested you are in our natives and the question you have asked me have really created great joy in me. You are the first one to ask so many important questions concerning our aborigines and I have much pleasure in answering: –

1. We are earnestly pleading for Federal Control as it is almost impossible to be granted an aboriginal representative in Parliament while natives are under State control. It is therefore the duty of every person to persuade the authorities to grant Federal Control.

2. The uncivilised natives should remain as they are at present but should be well protected by the various governments from harm. They should be assured of sufficient food when drought or other circumstances limit their natural supply.

3. The Semi-civilised should be brought under Christian control and educated to take their place in the community.

4. Civilised natives who are capable should be compensated with land out of the countless millions of acres taken from them. They should be helped to cultivate this land for their own benefit.

5. Large settlements like Cumeroogunga can definitely be governed by the natives themselves and not be supervised at the beck and call of a white man. As you know, many of the natives know more than many of the managers of Government stations, who are often not the best type of men to be placed in charge of these stations.

6. I will be 80 years of age on 18th December next and I feel that I would be unable to represent my people in Parliament. I am sorry to say that I do not know of one aboriginal in Australia that I could recommend for the job.

In conclusion I would like to say that we have strong support from the people of Melbourne, but, on account of the war we are unable to make appeals to carry on our work. We are therefore grateful for what our friends donate to us to help us on. You will be surprised to hear that I have been working for the cause for nine years without any payment and have spent over £100 of my own money and I am only drawing a pension. However I don't mind for it is for a good cause and I have European blood in my veins. I am endeavouring to clear myself with the Supreme Ruler from the cruelty that is being committed against the original occupants of this country. I am living in hopes of being rewarded in the end

I feel sure that you will agree with me when I say that the vast majority of Church people in Australia are not living up to their profession when they allow such cruelty and neglect to continue. I am not driving at any individual but the people as a whole.

It was very unfortunate for the aborigines to lose your dearly beloved father and mother. Had they lived and worked to now we would have had aboriginal Doctors, Lawyers, Mechanical Engineers and other professional people and would also have had educated natives capable of representing our people in Parliament. Unfortunately the loss of your dear father has prolonged the Uplift of the natives.

Before closing I wish to ask if you can find the Queen's proclamation for the protection of the aborigines. Dad had one copy when you were at Maloga. It would be great use to me if I could get it.

I will now close with kindest regards.