

William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Premier of New South Wales, Bertram Stevens, 1 January 1938, New South Wales Archives and Records, NRS 12060, Item No. [12/8749-8750]

In the name of the League I have to lodge a strong protest against the type of homes now being built at Cumeroogunja, both in respect of their size and the details of the buildings.

We have heard much for some time about the old camps, built under Government policy within the past few years in some cases, being condemned and being replaced by good homes. We expected that the homes would be better than the ones built 50 years ago but we now find them to be of only two rooms and built of mill rubbish. No windows are being provided but wooden shutters which, if open, will let in weather and if closed will shut out fresh air. While every authority is talking of removing slums Slums are being built at Cumeroogunja. While the papers are talking housing reform, the natives are to get hovels.

We protest that our people ought to be able to observe common decency. How that can be done with two rooms I can't imagine. Instead of brick chimneys we have tin ones. Frankly the dark people, educated during the last 50 years to appreciate the amenities of life, are to be pushed back into barbarous conditions.

While registering this complaint, we reiterate our previous representations about the sanitary system (or want of it). Nothing but sheer necessity will send a person to these abominable places. The pans get overfull and have no lids, so that being carted away the contents are spilled in the road.

We were being encouraged to expect something decent but it appears that we are to be dehumanised.

I do trust that you will have the work stopped till you can have the matter investigated and that then you will issue instructions for something better.