

William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, 4 February 1939, National Archives of Australia, A461, A300/1, Part 3

I am grateful to learn from Mr McEwen that the matter of our aboriginal race's future is coming up for discussion next week in Hobart. We have such a confidence in you and Mr McEwen that we are expecting that you are going to see full justice done to our people. Your attitude to the present has always impressed us and the Minister responsible for our destiny, the Minister for the Interior, has for some time and particularly with Mr McEwen and Mr Paterson, always impressed us with being solicitous for our welfare. We do feel, however, that it is consonant with British tradition that all people should have a say in their destiny. That is why we sought a member of Parliament and are asking that all Boards have Aboriginal representation and all aboriginal stations should allow the natives a share in the administration of their people.

Now that you have agreed, according to press notices, that there is to be a branch for Aboriginal Affairs under a suitable officer we would like to say that we have in mind one who would be very acceptable to natives, in the person of Dr T. G. H. Strehlow, now Patrol Officer for the Centre and located at Jay Creek reserve, near Alice Springs. Dr Strehlow was born and brought up among natives, the son of a man who did a monumental work for our people. In consonance with the principle of a voice in our own destiny we submit his name for your consideration as you come to the consideration of the matter. As you will know, Dr Strehlow has the requisite qualifications and in addition he has that love for the people he was brought up with that we feel he would be the one to implement the policy of the Administration.

Trusting that you may regard our claim to a voice in our own destiny as being in line with British policy,