

**William Cooper, Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, 20 February 1939, National Archives of Australia, A461, A300/1, Part 3**

The following resolution was adopted at a public meeting called in Melbourne by this league. The meeting was, excepting for a sprinkling of our members, one of white people:—

1. That this meeting of Melbourne citizens heartily welcomes the new policy of the Federal Government which provides for a Native Affairs Branch of the Department of the Interior. It believes, however, that the Administrator appointed should have a personal understanding of the aborigines and of Australian conditions and recommends the appointment of Dr Strehlow, now Patrol Officer with headquarters at Jay Creek reserve, for this post.

Since the adoption of this resolution we learn of another appointment being made. May we request that the claims of Dr Strehlow, who is unaware of our action and may not be seeking an appointment, to some post where his singular knowledge of and love for aborigines will be able to be used to their advantage. Dr Strehlow is a son of Rev. Strehlow, missionary of Hermansburg in times past. He was born on the reserve and knows the aborigines. He is a trained anthropologist and now on the staff of the Department. I would emphasise that this suggestion is made only with the knowledge of his suitability from the point of view of the natives. We have not consulted Dr Strehlow at all.

2. The following resolution was also adopted:—

Seeing that the chief menace to the native women of [the] Northern Territory is from the Japanese crews of Australian owned luggers, this meeting of Australian citizens calls on the Federal Government to implement the legislation and regulations to prohibit Japanese, whether on Japanese owned luggers or Australian, or any other person, from entering within the three mile limit of a reservation. That we also urge the proclamation of Melville Island as a reservation so making it possible for the natives of the Bathurst Island Mission being protected and the splendid work of the mission for the uplift of aborigines to be carried in successfully.

The knowledge that the legislation is not being enforced on the crews of Australian owned luggers shocked the meeting and the protection desired by the Missions should be accorded.