

***Workers' Voice*, 1 March 1939, p. 2, Half Caste Aborigine [Margaret Tucker],
Conditions at Cummeroogunga**

“As a constant reader of the “Workers’ Voice”, and a half-caste aborigine who has experienced conditions at the Cummeroogunga Mission Station, I should like to confirm the article in your issue of February 11,” writes “Half-caste Aborigine” to the “Voice”.

“The conditions at Cummeroogunga are shocking. The rations issued by the administration are often rotten—not fit for pigs to eat. Housing and sanitary conditions are vile. Cows that supply the aborigine children with what little milk they receive drink at a damn in which sanitary Pans are washed. Some of these cows are tubercular, and should be destroyed. Giving evidence before a Commission in N.S.W., a former sister at the mission said that trachoma ... is rampant in the settlement.

“The Mission has many acres of land which we could work up ourselves, but rather than give it to us the Aborigine ‘Protection’ Board leases it out for grazing purposes.

Aboriginal men working on the Mission some years ago were ‘given’ blocks of densely timbered land. As soon as they had cleared the land it was taken away from them.

“The people at Cumeroogunga lived in constant fear of their children being taken from them by the Board, and being placed in homes. Wholesale kidnapping (it was nothing less) occurred on the Mission only a few years ago. The Manager sent the aboriginal men away on a rabbiting expedition.

“No sooner had they left the station than car loads of police (who had been waiting) dashed in and seized all the children they could get their hands on. These children were bundled into the cars and taken away for the Board to dispose of. Many of them never saw their parents again. [The seizure of aboriginal children by State authorities is still legal in New South Wales and Western Australia.—Ed.]

“These are only some of the terrible things that confront our People. I appeal to all ‘Voice’ readers to help us in our fight for liberty and freedom. Help us to protect ourselves from the clutches of the Aborigine Protection Board.”