

***Argus*, 18 April 1936, p. 18, Aborigines' Plea. Unhappy since Batman's Day**

Pathetic appeals for assistance for their people were made last night by aborigines at a meeting called to arrange the co-ordination of aboriginal amelioration organisations. They asked that something should be done so that their children and grandchildren should not have to suffer the disabilities and indignities they had had to undergo. The meeting was attended by a number of half-caste aborigines and many children. Douglas Nicholls, the League footballer, and Lynch Cooper, the Stawell Gift runner, were both present. Several of the aborigines sang corroboree choruses.

Mr W. Cooper said that his people felt themselves strangers within the gates of civilisation. White people seemed to care little whether they starved, and they generally gave to the aborigines the worst of civilisation instead of the best.

Speaking very diffidently Mrs M. Tucker, who came from the Moama Station, said that her people had a few real sympathisers. "We have not been happy since the days of Batman", she said; "we are sullen and oppressed through no fault of our own. We do not object to being nursemaids, servants, and washerwomen, but we would like our girls to learn a little more than that. We would like to learn the games white girls play. We are not angels, I know; but we are human and would like to be treated as such. I am glad that I am black and that the bruises one of my mistresses put on me never showed" ...

Resolutions were passed urging that arrangements should be made for proper educational facilities for all aborigines, and that they should have full civic rights and legislative representation.