

William Cooper, Honorary Secretary, Australian Aborigines' League, to the Premier of New South Wales, Bertram Stevens, 7 June 1937, New South Wales Archives and Records, NRS 12060, Item No. [12/8749-8750]

Thank you for all you are undertaking to do for Cumeroogunja. This is, I understand, the biggest station for aboriginals in New South Wales and one of the biggest in Australia. It is so advantageously situated that it is an ideal place for an experiment, which, if successful, (I am confident it will be if patiently tried out) will lead the way to a new policy for aboriginal development that will solve the two present problems, the aborigines themselves, and the cost of administration.

Your replies have suggested that you have something less ambitious that we aboriginals propose but we hope you will fully try out our ideas, which we believe will make aboriginal administration self supporting, something the administration will appreciate, and will develop self-reliance in the dark race, something we thinking aboriginals greatly desire. We do want gardens for the dark folk and the encouragement to self help in that way but we would like the idea of an irrigation settlement, growing the various things the land is so adapted for, in which our men will work. Why should there be Chinese gardens and not aboriginals gardens also. Why should we not be able to send our produce to the market with the product of alien's gardens? There is room for us, and in any case who should have this right before the dark race itself? Trust us, patiently try us out and so initiate another era, an era of hope.

When the water is available and the new homes built a septic tank should be installed. The present lavatories are open to the flies, and the food equally open, with the resultant disease which is so serious a matter on this station.

We make this appeal in the name of Humanity to the British reputation for fair play and consideration of the down and out. We appeal not only to the Government of the people but to the lovers of the Meek and Lowly for the Christlike handling of a problem which is growing more serious day by day and will, if not remedied, be a problem of the most serious nature for the Commonwealth. Still, in dealing with the problem let the fact of the self liquidation of the financial obligations assumed be a real factor. We pledge the League to do all in its power to make the experiment a success.

Yours appreciatively.