

[Abo Call, April 1938)

To All Aborigines!

“The Abo Call” is our own paper.

It has been established to present the case for Aborigines, from the point of view of the Aborigines themselves.

This paper has nothing to do with missionaries, or anthropologists, or with anybody who looks down on Aborigines as an “inferior” race.

We are NOT an inferior race, we have merely been refused the chance of education that whites receive. “The Abo Call” will show that we do not want to go back to the Stone Age.

Representing 60,000 Full Bloods and 20,000 Halfcastes in Australia, we raise our voice to ask for Education, Equal Opportunity and Full Citizen Rights.

“The Abo Call” will be published once a month. Price 3d.

The Editor asks all Aborigines and Halfcastes to support the paper, by buying it and also by acting as agents for sale to white friends and supporters.

Please send postal note when ordering copies.

Address all letters to:-

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General Post Office, Sydney, N.S.W.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA MR. J.A. LYONS, P.C., C.H., M.H.R.

Sir,

In respectfully placing before you the following POLICY FOR ABORIGINES. We wish to state that this policy has been endorsed by a Conference of Aborigines, held in Sydney on 26th January of this year. This policy is the only policy which has the support of the Aborigines themselves.

URGENT INTERIM POLICY

Before placing before you a long-range policy for Aborigines, and while the long-range policy is under consideration, we ask as a matter of urgency: That the Commonwealth Government should make a special financial grant to each of the State Governments, in proportion to the number of Aborigines in each State, to supplement existing grants for Aborigines. We ask that such aid should be applied to increasing the rations and improving the housing conditions of Aborigines at present under State control. We beg that this matter be treated urgently, as our people are being starved to death.

The following ten points embraces a LONG RANGE POLICY FOR ABORIGINES, endorsed by our Association.

A LONG RANGE POLICY FOR ABORIGINES

- 1.- We respectfully request that there should be a National Policy for Aborigines. We advocate Commonwealth Government control of all Aboriginal affairs.
- 2.- We suggest the appointment of a Commonwealth Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister to have full Cabinet rank.
- 3.- We suggest the appointment of an Administrative Head of the proposed Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Administrator to be advised by an Advisory Board, consisting of six persons, three of whom at least should be of Aboriginal blood, to be nominated by the Aborigines Progressive Association.
- 4.- The aim of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs should be to raise all Aborigines throughout the Commonwealth to full Citizen Status and civil equality

with the whites in Australia. In particular, and without delay, all Aborigines should be entitled:

- (a) To receive the same educational opportunities as white people.
- (b) To receive the benefits of labour legislation, including Arbitration Court Awards, on an equality with white workers.
- (c) To receive the full benefits of workers' compensation and insurance.
- (d) To receive the benefits of old-age and invalid pensions, whether living in Aboriginal settlements or not.
- (e) To own land and property, and to be allowed to save money in personal banking accounts, and to come under the same laws regarding intestacy and transmission of property as the white population.
- (f) To receive wages in cash, and not by orders, issue of rations, or apprenticeship systems.

5.- We recommend that Aborigines and Halfcastes should come under the same marriage laws as white people, and should be free to marry partners of their choice, irrespective of colour.

6.- We recommend that Aborigines should be entitled to the same privileges regarding housing as are white workers.

7.- We recommend that a special policy of Land Settlement for Aborigines should be put into operation, whereby Aborigines who desire to settle on the land should be given the same encouragement as that given to Immigrants or Soldier Settlers, with expert tuition in agriculture, and financial assistance to enable such settlers to become ultimately self-supporting.

8.- In regard to uncivilised and semi-civilised Aborigines, we suggest that patrol officers, nurses, and teachers, both men and women, of Aboriginal blood, should be specially trained by the Commonwealth Government as Aboriginal Officers, to bring the wild people into contact with civilisation.

9.- We recommend that all Aboriginal and Halfcaste women should be entitled to maternity and free hospital treatment during confinement, and that there should be no discrimination against Aboriginal women, who should be entitled to clinical instruction on baby welfare, similar to that given to white women.

10.- While opposing a policy of segregation, we urge that, during a period of transition, the present Aboriginal Reserves should be retained as a sanctuary for aged or incompetent Aborigines who may be unfitted to take their place in the white community, owing to the past policy of neglect.