

## Gladys Nicholls: An Urban Aboriginal Leader in Post-war Victoria

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**Abstract:** Gladys Nicholls was an Aboriginal activist in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Victoria who made significant contributions to the development of support networks for the expanding urban Aboriginal community of inner-city Melbourne. She was a key member of a talented group of Indigenous Australians, including her husband Pastor Doug Nicholls, who worked at a local, state and national level to improve the economic wellbeing and civil rights of their people, including for the 1967 Referendum. Those who knew her remember her determined personality, her political intelligence and her unrelenting commitment to building a better future for Aboriginal people.

**Keywords:** Aboriginal women, Aboriginal activism, Gladys Nicholls, Pastor Doug Nicholls, assimilation, Victorian Aborigines Advancement League, 1967 Referendum

Gladys Nicholls (1906–1981) was an Indigenous leader who was significant from the 1940s to the 1970s, first, in action to improve conditions for Aboriginal people in Melbourne and second, in grassroots activism for Indigenous rights across Australia. When the Victorian government inscribed her name on the Victorian Women’s Honour Roll in 2008, the citation prepared by historian Richard Broome read as follows: ‘Lady Gladys Nicholls was an inspiration to Indigenous People, being a role model for young women, a leader in advocacy for the rights of Indigenous people as well as a tireless contributor to the community’.<sup>1</sup> Her leadership was marked by strong collaboration and co-operation with like-minded women and men, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who were at the forefront of Indigenous reform, including her prominent husband, Pastor (later Sir) Doug Nicholls. In decades during which a small but increasing number of Aboriginal people and their families relocated to Melbourne in search of jobs, Gladys Nicholls was at the forefront of grassroots workers who sustained networks to develop resources and facilities that were crucial for their material support and community lives. She became a leader at a state-wide and national level when she and her co-workers became advocates for Aboriginal peoples’ entitlements as Australian citizens and first people. Her leadership involved advocacy for the rights of Indigenous people throughout Australia, which she

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effected in the 1950s as co-founder and coordinator of the Women's Auxiliary of the Aborigines Advancement League and, in the 1960s, as a worker for the Federal Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as well as secretary of the Victorian branch of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Council.<sup>2</sup>

Gladys Nicholls' family and community placed her in a network of prominent Indigenous activists from whom she learned a good deal. She was one of a number of talented Indigenous people connected with the Cummeragunja Aboriginal Reserve in southern New South Wales, who, beginning with William Cooper, Margaret Tucker and Doug Nicholls from the 1920s, shifted to Melbourne in search of greater opportunities and freedom from the restriction of life on reserves and missions.<sup>3</sup> Her grandson, Gary Murray, and Mavis Thorpe Clark, who interviewed Gladys along with her husband when she wrote a biography of Doug Nicholls first published in 1956, have both traced the early details of Gladys Nicholls' life. She was born Gladys Bux in Cummeragunja on 21 October 1906. Her mother, Alice Campbell, was descended from several Indigenous groups, including the Yorta Yorta. Her father was a migrant from India, who, in Gladys's childhood, ran a general store in Barmah in northern Victoria, just across the Murray River from the Cummeragunja Aboriginal Reserve. Gladys was the third of the couple's six children. She and her siblings crossed the Murray on a punt each day to attend the primary school on the reserve. There they were taught by the dedicated Thomas James, a migrant from Mauritius closely associated first with the original Maloga Mission established in the area and later with the government reserve, Cummeragunja, which took Maloga's place.<sup>4</sup> After completing grade three, Gladys worked in her father's store, nurturing the hope of one day learning to be a seamstress in Melbourne to make clothing that her father could sell in the store. But in her mid-teens, she secured a job milking cows night and morning on nearby Kotupna Station.

At the age of nineteen years, Gladys married Herbert (known as 'Dowie') Nicholls, one of the five children of Florence and Herbert Nicholls of Cummeragunja, with which the whole Nicholls family remained strongly identified. The young couple lived on Cummeragunja, where Gladys cared for the ailing Florence till she died in 1932. Florence, a devout Christian, influenced the young couple, who considered for a time offering themselves for missionary service. In 1939, Gladys and Dowie joined an exodus from Cummeragunja of many residents who rejected the manager's authoritarian administration, and crossed the Murray to seek better conditions at Barmah.<sup>5</sup> From there, Gladys and Dowie relocated to Melbourne, where Gladys found work at the Maribyrnong munitions factory. In April 1942, tragedy struck the

family when Dowie was badly injured in a car accident and died from head injuries, leaving Gladys with three children: Nora aged 15 years, Bevan aged 12 and Lillian aged 5.

Dowie's younger brother, Doug Nicholls, gave the bereaved family strong support in the aftermath of Dowie's death. Doug had left Cummeragunja in his early teens. A talented sportsman, he eventually found a place as a footballer—with the Northcote club from 1927 to 1931 and then with Fitzroy in the Victorian Football League—and worked during the week as a groundsman. With the outbreak of World War II, he enlisted in the army but was asked to return to Fitzroy as a worker among the many Indigenous people who were moving to the area from rural Victoria. The following year, Doug, influenced strongly by Indigenous Cummeragunja pastor Eddy Atkinson, became a pastor in the Fitzroy Church of Christ in Gore Street to a thriving congregation that included an Aboriginal flock of a hundred or more. In December 1942, in St Martin's Church, Carlton, Gladys and Doug Nicholls were married; Gladys bore three more children in this second marriage.<sup>6</sup> The two entered a partnership to rear their growing family while they nurtured the needs of others of their people in their own special ways. Gladys Nicholls' potential as a leader brought her into prominence as she networked with Indigenous and humanitarian communities locally and interstate. She also served as an anchor for the similarly dedicated Doug Nicholls' own impressive career.

Gladys Nicholls and her colleagues undertook work within the Indigenous community in a context of governmental assimilation policy that in part shaped the character of their activism. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, control of Indigenous affairs was a state, not a federal, concern. Starting in the 1930s, however, successive federal governments aimed to define a common policy for the country, an initiative from which Victoria could not remain isolated. The first national conference of state officials responsible for implementing Indigenous policies occurred in 1937, at which the questioning of the current policy of segregation of Indigenous people began. Many who participated in the debate promoted the benefits of an assimilation policy on a national stage. Subsequent national meetings in the 1940s and early 1950s advocated more urgently the pursuit of this goal as international eyes turned accusingly on Australia because of the adverse social position of its Indigenous people. Post-war delegates were the responsible state ministers and not simply, as previously, bureaucrats. None expressed understanding of, or respect for, existing Aboriginal culture; rather, they fixed their eyes on the elimination of Indigenous economic and social disadvantage through one route: assimilation into white society. They

appeared unaware of and unconcerned about the denial of the value of an Aboriginal identity that their version of assimilation implied. In effect, they implicitly blamed Aboriginal people for resisting acculturation into western ways.<sup>7</sup>

When invited to the national conference on Aborigines held in 1951, the Victorian premier replied that it was not necessary for Victoria to be represented because there were only nine Aborigines left in the whole state. In Victoria, 'Aborigine' legally meant a person of full Aboriginal descent. Assimilation was not a new concept in this particular state. Since legislation introduced in 1886, successive governments had attempted to force residents of mixed descent off the missions and reserves into precarious lives in settler communities.<sup>8</sup> Fewer than 2,000 Aboriginal people survived the frontier decades, their numbers falling to about 500 by 1930, but rising steadily to about 2,000 by 1960.<sup>9</sup> Most people of mixed descent saw themselves as Aboriginal and were treated as such by the white population. None had retained state-recognised rights to land, and a mere few had obtained freehold title to land through purchase on the open market. The sole reserve left by the 1920s from the initial eight reserves and missions set up in the 1860s was the former Anglican mission at Lake Tyers in east Gippsland, where several hundred Aboriginal people received minimal state assistance, supplementing this income with seasonal outside work. In exchange for poor housing and meagre allowances of foodstuffs and clothing, the residents faced demeaning surveillance over their daily lives from the manager and the Board for Protection of the Aborigines. Other Aboriginal family and kinship groups, evading such structures, camped in near destitution on former mission lands or on the outskirts of country towns in Gippsland, on the Murray River to the north of the state and elsewhere. Nominally free citizens, they were in fact subject to racist social discrimination in employment, as were their children in local schools.<sup>10</sup>

The Indigenous Victorians who formed the inner-city Aboriginal community in Melbourne had left situations of poverty and challenge. Amidst the intensifying national push for assimilation of the 1950s, the Victorian government slowly accepted Indigenous people of mixed descent as true Aborigines, and hence acknowledged some accountability for their circumstances. In 1955, the government commissioned a retired magistrate, Charles McLean, to undertake a survey of Aboriginal living situations. The McLean Report, tabled in parliament two years later, described the appalling conditions under which 'fringe dwellers', in particular, lived, and, in line with national objectives, recommended the assimilation of Aborigines as swiftly as possible into white society.<sup>11</sup> The subsequent Aborigines Act declared all

Aborigines, not just those at Lake Tyers, subject to state intervention. The government would phase in the closure of Lake Tyers, and its residents, as well as other Aboriginal people camped elsewhere in appalling conditions, would be transferred to town housing.<sup>12</sup> The Act replaced the Board of Protection with an Aborigines Welfare Board that was enjoined to be far more active in bringing about assimilation. The new board would contain just two Aborigines—and, even then, only if they were considered appropriately qualified. The Victorian government had no doubt that it knew what was best for Aboriginal people and proposed to act accordingly.

Activists in the state would have to work as a lobby group without any official imprimatur. Gladys Nicholls and her colleagues faced a political culture in which governments ostensibly applauded the movement of Indigenous Australians into urban areas to live and work in white communities, but neglected to provide structures of support or minimal material security to assist those who had made the shift. Given the collaborative nature of the community work by Aboriginal women in Melbourne, it is difficult to identify special contributions. The citation for Gladys's Victorian honour mentioned particularly her work as a Sunday School teacher at the Gore Street Aboriginal Church, where Doug Nicholls was the pastor; her service as the founder and coordinator of the Aboriginal Children's Christmas Giving Tree; and her role as the founder and matron in 1956 of the first Indigenous Girls' Hostel in Northcote, which was named after her.<sup>13</sup> As a leader, she acted cooperatively with other leading activists in the community around the inner suburbs of Fitzroy and Collingwood in a city that had already seen Aboriginal activism. In the 1930s, William Cooper had established the Australian Aborigines League, which had lobbied for the introduction of dedicated seats in parliament for Aborigines such as existed for Maori in New Zealand, and, in 1938, he organised an Aboriginal Day of Mourning in Sydney to coincide with Australia's sesquicentenary celebrations.<sup>14</sup> During the Second World War, the group was enlarged by those Aboriginal people who moved to Melbourne to secure war-related jobs and, from 1945, by the increasing numbers of young people who left impoverished rural communities to seek employment in the city. Closely associated with this endeavour was Margaret Tucker, also with links to southern New South Wales, who began her public life in Victoria as a campaigner alongside Cooper. Tucker was active as a fundraiser for Cummeragunja residents who, in 1939, walked off the reserve in protest to settle in Victoria around the Mooroopna–Shepparton area.

Gladys Nicholls and the other Aboriginal women activists acted at first under the umbrella of organisations open to both sexes in which men still sustained the prominent profiles: first, the existing Australian Aborigines League,

formed in 1932; and second, the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League, which commenced in 1957. Within the latter organisation, they formed a women's auxiliary that was the forerunner of the United Aboriginal & Islander Women's Council, which came into existence in 1963. Doug Nicholls emerged as the outstanding Indigenous leader after the death of Cooper in 1942.<sup>15</sup> The Australian Aborigines League's unobtrusive assistance to Indigenous people in the state was augmented from the mid-fifties after Nicholls won widespread publicity in 1957 for the plight of Aborigines moved to the Warburton Ranges from the site of the British atomic tests. The result was the formation of the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League (VAAL), in which Aborigines collaborated with sympathetic white Victorians—some church people, some left-wingers—to strengthen Victoria's voice in the emerging national campaign for Indigenous rights. Nicholls would be one of three Indigenous men present in Adelaide in 1958 for the foundation meeting of the first national organisation, the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement.<sup>16</sup> In Victoria, the Australian Aborigines League was not eclipsed but, in effect, became the Aboriginal branch of the bi-racial VAAL.

Gladys Nicholls was one Indigenous woman leader who reached out through these initial organisations to bring reform ideas from Victoria into the national scene and to translate the national agenda into organisations that resonated particularly for Indigenous women. Gladys Nicholls and many other outstanding women were to the fore in all the complex activities of the Australian Aborigines League and then the VAAL as these groups sought, against considerable obstacles, to promote the interests of Indigenous people both nationally and in the state. In Melbourne after the war, Margaret Tucker continued to be a forceful advocate for her people and became an Indigenous member of the Aboriginal Welfare Board (alongside the well-known tenor, Harold Blair), serving till the board's disbandment in 1967.<sup>17</sup> Her sister, Geraldine Briggs, and their daughters, Mollie Dyer, Hyllus Maris and Margaret Wirrpanda, also played a crucial role in the networking of Indigenous women in the state. Gladys became a prominent leader alongside these other effective activists, bringing a fresh resource of enterprise and energy to women's initiatives. On top of her own domestic work as carer for her children and invalid mother, she provided accommodation at any one time for upwards of six teenage girls in need of lodgings. It became something of a joke to say: 'Doug brings home the work, and Gladys does the work'.<sup>18</sup> Wynnies Onus, Amy Charles (William Cooper's daughter) and Merle Jackomos, married to activists Bill Onus, Henry Charles and Alick Jackomos, were among other women who contributed constructively as part of activist families.<sup>19</sup>

Gladys Nicholls was a central figure in the establishment of the Women's Auxiliary to the VAAL in 1957, and travelled around Victoria recruiting members and disseminating information. The women who joined the auxiliary had earlier made a strong contribution to fundraising for a hostel for Aboriginal girls, often from orphanages and other institutions, seeking work in Melbourne. Amy Charles was appointed to manage the Northcote Hostel, named Cummeragunja; opportunities had previously been rare for Indigenous women to display their talents and hone their skills in such ways. The auxiliary continued to support the girls' hostel while also extending their fundraising to establish a comparable hostel for Indigenous boys. Although this setting aside of dedicated space for Aboriginal people undoubtedly ran counter to official policies of assimilation, no state official intervened to prevent their enterprise. In addition, the women worked to assist children to continue their studies at high school, providing clothing, shoes and books. They also opened a community centre for adults in central Melbourne that was well patronised by the local community and those rural Aboriginal people who needed to come to the city for such purposes as hospital visits.<sup>20</sup> Auxiliary members supported people, often adolescents, who found themselves in crises: appearing in courts, leaving jail, fighting alcohol dependence or losing jobs. They were a social and legal resource for information too. Some Aboriginal people complained, for example, that they had been declared too white to live on Lake Tyers and hence get special assistance as Indigenous people, and yet too black to receive Commonwealth welfare payments as white people.

The Melbourne women collaborated with the men but were the crucial workers in particular areas, above all in the fundraising ventures without which few of the group's activities could have proceeded. Gladys Nicholls had been responsible for the opening of the first opportunity shop that the women staffed on a volunteer basis; it was a tremendous success and they opened a second. The women baked the cakes and sewed, knitted and crocheted to provide the goods sold at the weekly street stall outside the Northcote Town Hall and occasionally elsewhere also, when an event opened up an auspicious occasion for quick sales. Women were often the front people who approached sympathetic individual firms for donations or to take out a paid advertisement in the newsletter, and they served as collectors on the special donation days. Women, with the assistance of Aboriginal men, organised functions such as dances and the annual Aboriginal balls, at which young Indigenous women competed for titles as front-running fundraisers;<sup>21</sup> these were also opportunities for the women to show their skills as seamstresses. Given that the state was not providing funds for any of the

causes that benefited from the women's exertions, this work was crucially important. The Melbourne activists joined the residents in their campaign to preserve Lake Tyers as an Indigenous reserve and to have removed the restrictions on residents' civil liberties. It was a campaign they would sustain through the sixties, until together they finally saw the reserve handed over to its Indigenous owners.

On 19 September 2010, ABC television showed a segment of the series, 'Bloodlines', focused on the Nicholls family, in which many of the talented second- and third-generation family members spoke of the legacy of Gladys Nicholls, along with her husband, Doug. They expressed great pride in their grandparents for being two leaders 'way ahead of their time'. Of Gladys, all reiterated the opinion of the couple's grandson, Jason Tamiru, that she was 'a wonderful lady'. Their daughter, Pamela Pederson, continued:

You know, in the early part we didn't have hostels, and we had a lot of the young people come stay with us. So, I was always sharing my bedroom, and then eventually Mum and Dad thought, "OK, let's start building a hostel". So with my aunties and uncles they formed a committee.

Doug was the better known of the pair, but, said Pamela Pederson: 'Mum was behind him too, to get him to where he got to'. She acted, the family reported, as an assistant to Doug in all his enterprises. Her daughter Lilian Tamiru recalled:

There were many days we didn't see Dad. He would be away for days. My mother's strength was, I think, more than Dad's. She was this backbone in the family that kept us all together and all in line. And she had this wonderful inner strength that Dad knew she had and would push him forward if needed to. I think she had a lot of input into a lot of the things that he should do. Because she was also political in her thinking. They were absolutely perfectly matched.<sup>22</sup>

Believing that Indigenous peoples would benefit from better living conditions, and their children from good schooling and skills to take them into the labour force, the women activists of the fifties had gone some way to co-operate with state officials. The women made only modest headway in securing better resources and raising living standards because they operated from numerical disadvantage in the face of governments that were supremely confident of their reform agendas and, in the case of Victoria, were brusque in the exercise of their authority. Given the fragile frameworks of power within which the



women operated, they can be seen to have pushed the boundaries of possibilities in a decade before the international civil rights and anti-Vietnam War radicalism reinforced their protests. Australia witnessed the slow transformation of the consciousnesses of non-Indigenous compatriots about the value and integrity of Indigenous cultures. The route to such awareness had indeed inhered in the work of women activists of the 1950s such as Gladys Nicholls.

In a column in the VAAL's newsletter, *Smoke Signals*, in the early 1960s, a white supporter posed the question: 'Is assimilation of Aborigines working?' The writer alluded to fine Indigenous songs, dances and art in danger of dying. 'Preservation of such worthwhile facets of Aboriginal life is difficult under assimilation where the emphasis is on making natives like ourselves', the columnist said regretfully. 'Integration, along the Maori pattern, would surely bring better results by way of more emotional security for them, a richer culture pattern for us'.<sup>23</sup> Yet Gladys Nicholls offered leadership among those other Indigenous women who were active in the task of improving the life chances of their people in the 1950s, although they were obliged to tread ambivalent paths. In the post-war years, governments stressed their goal as the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into white society at a time when increased numbers of Aborigines were living in urban contexts. The Indigenous activists undoubtedly wanted to see their communities gain access to state and other funds to improve Indigenous education, housing and health. They rejected, on the other hand, denigratory characterisations of Aborigines and asserted the validity of their own cultural values and entitlements to rights as first-nation peoples. The Victorian Aboriginal activists waged their campaigns from outside state structures in a climate antagonistic to their history and culture. In Australia, the victory of the 1967 Referendum, which succeeded in removing two discriminatory clauses from the Constitution, was a harbinger of changing attitudes. The core of Aboriginal protest in Australia shifted character, with activists emerging who rebutted a version of assimilation that demanded as the price for social justice that Aborigines must abandon their identity as a special people.

In 1972, Gladys and Doug Nicholls received titles when Doug was knighted for his services to Indigenous people, an event for which they both travelled to London. In 1977, Premier Don Dunstan appointed Doug Nicholls as governor of South Australia; the Nicholls performed their duties with commitment and dignity in the period before Doug was forced to resign because of ill health. Gladys sustained her commitment to Indigenous rights, though with diminished active engagement, until she died in 1981 at the age of 74. She was buried in Cummeragunja Cemetery as was Doug when he too

died in 1988. A statue to commemorate the significant contribution they made to the wellbeing and status of Indigenous Australians was erected in their honour in the Parliament Gardens in Melbourne in 2009. Gladys Nicholls was paid special tribute at the unveiling, being described as ‘a strong, passionate, intelligent and resourceful woman who worked tirelessly for the Aboriginal community.’<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Broome, citation for Lady Gladys Nicholls for her nomination for the Victorian Women’s Honour Roll 1908, at [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/women](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/women). For a description of the mid–20<sup>th</sup> century Melbourne Indigenous urban activists, see his *Aboriginal Victorians: A History Since 1800* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2005). This paper draws on a comparative Victorian/New Zealand paper on post-war Aboriginal and Maori women activists, co-written with Barbara Brookes of the University of Otago: Barbara Brookes and Patricia Grimshaw, ‘Indigenous Women, Social Activism and Assimilation Policies: New Zealand and Victoria, Australia, in the 1950s and 1960s’, Special Edition on Gender, edited by Margaret Allen and R.K. Dhawan, *Journal of Australasian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2006): 21–38.

<sup>2</sup> Broome, citation for Lady Gladys Nicholls, Victorian Honour Roll 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Sue Taffe traces Doug Nicholls’ life in Melbourne, particularly his involvement in national campaigns for Indigenous rights, and the participation of other activists, in her book, *Black and White Together: FCAATSI: The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders 1958–1973* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For a study of Maloga Mission, see Claire McLisky, ‘Settlers on a Mission: Faith, Power and Subjectivity in the Lives of Daniel and Janet Matthews’ (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> See Fiona Davis, ‘Colouring Within the Lines: Settler Colonialism and the Cummeragunja Aboriginal Station, 1888–1960s’ (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Gary Murray, ‘Pastor Sir Douglas Ralph Nicholls and Lady Gladys Nicholls, Biographies’, at [www.melbourne.vic.au/AboutMelbourne/.../Nicholls](http://www.melbourne.vic.au/AboutMelbourne/.../Nicholls); Mavis Thorpe Clark, *Pastor Doug: The Story of Sir Douglas Nicholls, Aboriginal Leader* (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, revised ed., 1972).

<sup>7</sup> See Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Australians* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, revised ed., 2010).

<sup>8</sup> See Ann McGrath (ed.), *Contested Ground: Australian Aborigines under the British Crown* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Broome, *Aboriginal Australians*, 143, 146–7, 209, 315.

<sup>10</sup> See Alick Jackomos and Derek Fowell (eds), *Living Aboriginal History of Victoria: Stories in the Oral Tradition* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jan

Critchett, *Untold Stories: Memories and Lives of Victorian Koories* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Charles Mclean, 'Report on the Operation of the Aborigines Act 1928 and the Regulations and Orders Made thereunder', *Victorian Parliamentary Papers 1956–1958*, Vol. 2, Paper No. 18, 1957.

<sup>12</sup> Corinne Manning, "'Humpies' to Houses' (PhD thesis, La Trobe University, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Broome, citation for Lady Gladys Nicholls, Victorian Honour Roll 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Markus, *Blood from a Stone: William Cooper and the Australian Aborigines' League* (Melbourne: Monash Publications in History, 1986). For an account of the Aboriginal Rights movement, see Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003); John Chesterman, 'Taking Civil Rights Seriously', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46, no. 4 (2000): 497–509.

<sup>15</sup> Thorpe Clark, *Pastor Doug*.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/>

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Tucker, *If Everyone Cared: Autobiography of Margaret Tucker* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> Mavis Thorpe Clark Papers, MS 13527, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>19</sup> For biographical information, see *Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia*, 2 vols (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994); *Lousy Little Sixpence* (Canberra: Ronin Films, 1983); and *Return to Cummeragunja: Hyllus Maris and her Mother Mrs Geraldine Briggs Speak, 26/8/85*, in AFC Women's Program, *Hyllus Maris and Mrs Briggs return to Cummeragunja* (Melbourne: Victorian Women's Film Unit, 1985).

<sup>20</sup> VAAL, *Victims or Victors? The Story of the Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1985).

<sup>21</sup> Richard Broome and Corinne Manning, *A Man of All Tribes: The Life of Alick Jackomos* (Melbourne: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/messagestick/stories>

<sup>23</sup> Lorna Lippman, 'Assimilation—Does it Work?', *Smoke Signals*, 1961.

<sup>24</sup> See Richard Broome, 'At the Grass Roots of White Support: Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League Branches, 1957–1972', *Indigenous Victorians: Repressed, Resourceful and Respected*, a special issue of the *La Trobe Journal*, no. 85 (May 2010): 141–56.