PRESS RELEASE

Immediate Release

This Thursday 6th December

Melbourne March Honouring 80th Anniversary of Aboriginal Statesman William Cooper

Australia’s Martin Luther King

80th Anniversary of his March

Against Nazi Oppression of Jews

&

World’s 1st Ever Joint

Jewish /Aboriginal Chanukah & Smoking Ceremony

From 5pm @ [Locations around Melbourne](https://walkingtogether.org.au/)

Meeting 6.30pm at Separation Memorial Flagstaff Gardens

Then walking to Alexandra Gardens @ 8pm for Main Ceremonies

PRE MEDIA-CONFERENCE

**4.30pm @ 73 Southampton St Footscray (outside)**

Interview opportunities with esteemed Yorta Yorta man, 90 yr old grandson of William Cooper & daughter Leonie Drummond

& Abe Schwarz Jewish Community Representative

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A commemorative march from the four corners of Melbourne will take place Thursday the 6th December to honour the late Aboriginal rights activist William Cooper, Australia’s answer to Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.

The march will also include a world 1st event being a joint Jewish Chanukah Lighting and /Aboriginal -Torres Strait Islanders People and traditional Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony will take place at Melbourne’s Flagstaff Garden on Thursday the 6th December at 8pm.

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The march commemorates the 80th anniversary of William Cooper’s march on the German consulate in Melbourne back in 1938 which was the only private protest in Australia against the Nazi regime and its atrocities against Germany’s Jewish community.

At a time when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were themselves denied equal rights and suffered ongoing persecution, William Cooper was the lone voice in Australia who stood up and demanded world action against what he saw to be the unacceptable actions of the Nazis.

Cooper, whose own people had no civil rights, legal rights or land rights saw the moral imperative to stand outside from his own world view for a group that he had no connection to on the other side of the world.

The march seeks to honour William Cooper’s memory by reminding all Australians of his selfless acts and acknowledging his heroic stand.

The lessons learnt from William Cooper are profound and remarkably relevant today in a time when human rights are routinely ignored and abused, even in Australia.

The march organisers believe that the world is in desperate need for more William Coopers who are prepared to step out of their social bubbles and comfort zones to stand up to tyrannical actions against human rights abuses.

The Walking Together Committee are inviting all Melbournians to join the several marches across Melbourne starting from 5pm and culminating at 6.30pm at the Separation Memorial at Flagstaff Gardens and finishing off with a Smoking Ceremony and Chanukah lighting at 8pm at Peppercorn Park, Alexandra Gardens.

Information about the marches can be found at the walkingtogether.org.au website.

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**William Cooper – The Unsung Hero**

**FACT SHEET**

* William Cooper – Australia’s Gandhi and Martin Luther King – The Aboriginal Moses – Leading his People to the Promised Land of Human Rights and Civil Rights and Land Rights.
* William Cooper (18 December 1860– 29 March 1941) was an Australian [Aboriginal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aborigine) political activist and community leader.
* William Cooper was born in [Yorta Yorta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yorta_Yorta_people) territory around the intersection of the  Murray and Goulburn Rivers in Victoria, Australia  on 18 December 1860.
* Cooper wasn’t just worried about his own cultural group and actively lobbied to help another suppressed minority despite being part of a victimised group himself.
* His actions were actually greater than Gandhi’s and Martin Luther King’s because he fought for a group outside of his immediate ethnic racial base.
* Cooper should be celebrated and taught throughout the school education system and put up as a role model that should be emulated.
* Cooper's long campaign for Aboriginal rights, began with the Maloga Petition in 1887. He was one of eleven signatories to the petition, which was addressed to the Governor of New South Wales.
* Cooper had helped establish the [Australian Aborigines League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aborigines_League) by 1935
* As its secretary, Cooper circulated a petition seeking direct representation in parliament, enfranchisement and land rights, on the basis that all Aborigines and Islanders were British subjects.
* In his own lifetime, William Cooper achieved almost none of the goals he had set for himself. The one exception[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Cooper_(Aboriginal_Australian)#cite_note-adb-1) was the creation of Aborigines Sunday, which was observed in Churches across Australia from 1940. It is still commemorated today, but as NAIDOC week. However, many of his initiatives have gained recognition long after his death.

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**William Cooper – The Unsung Hero**

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* Cooper was ignored by the Australian Government because of his aboriginality but was monitored by the Commonwealth Investigation Branch.
* Cooper had a higher moral compass than the ruling elite of the time who chose to ignore the pending genocide of the Jews.
* Need to celebrate the fact the aboriginal culture has such high moral standards that were superior to the oppressive western culture at the time. The moral compass of the Aboriginal elders is to be celebrated.
* The world needs to know about this historic anomaly that existed 80 years ago.