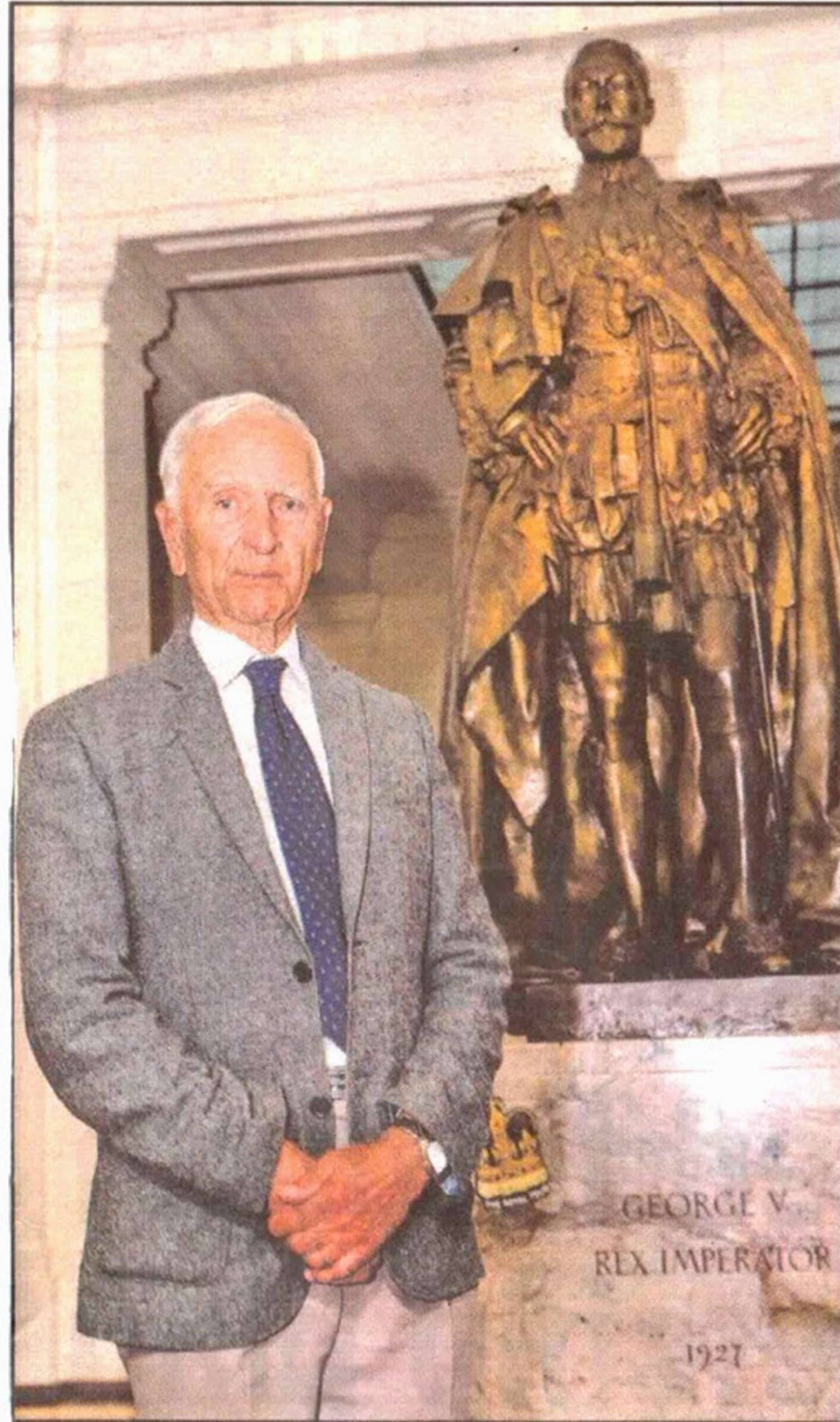


Queen to get petition

By MEZ FISHER



Alf 'Uncle Boydie' Turner in front of a statue of King George V. Picture by Andrew Sikorski - Art Atelier.



THE grandson of Aboriginal activist William Cooper is one step closer to delivering his grandfather's dream, after handing over an original 1930s petition to Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove, who has promised to deliver it to the Queen.

It's been a long road for Victoria's Alf 'Uncle Boydie' Turner, who grew up with his grandfather from the age of nine and remembers him writing the letter to King George V in 1934, calling for Indigenous justice and parliamentary representation.

"Seeing the petition was never sent, I decided within myself that I would see that it got to England," said Mr Turner, who turns 86 in October.

In 2012, he gave another of his grandfather's letters to the German consulate, which had refused to accept the original in 1938, protesting the Nazi leadership and its persecution of the Jewish community following the violence of Kristallnacht.

This year, it is his dream to finish the job and deliver the first petition from Australia's Indigenous people to the monarch.

With the help of "six or eight wonderful people", Mr Turner was able

"(Prince William) wanted to hear the story of my grandfather and about his life and how things were made hard for him..."

to meet with Prince William on his recent tour of Australia.

"He wanted to hear the story of my grandfather and about his life and how things were made hard for him by different people," Mr Turner said.

They spoke for about 15 minutes, and Prince William said he would help in any way he could.

However, Mr Turner had been instructed before he met the prince not to hand the petition to him, so when Prince William moved towards it "a chap pulled it away", Mr Turner said.

From there, a meeting was organised with the Governor-General and they met in Canberra last month.

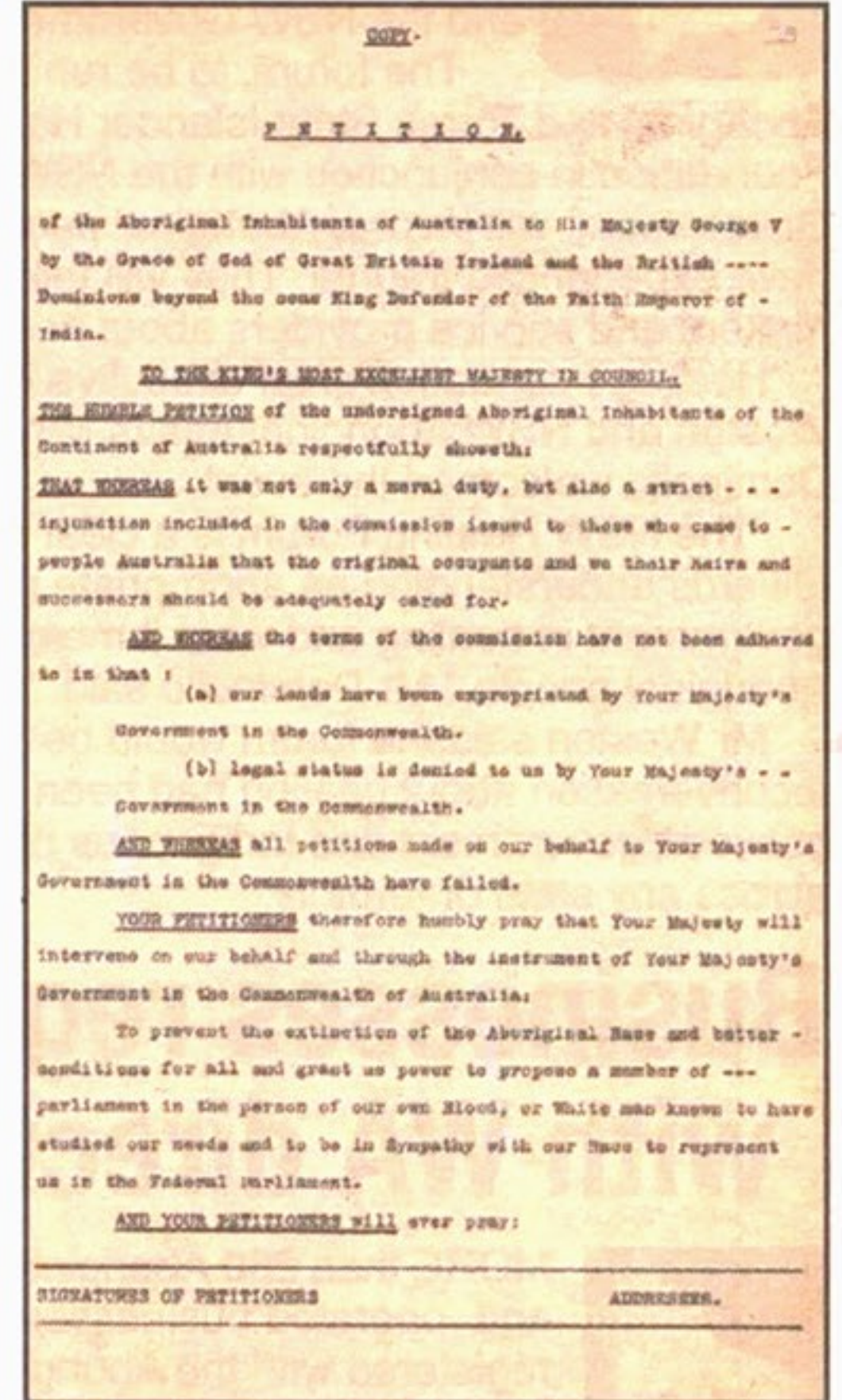
"He was great. He made us feel at home and even asked for more time with us," Mr Turner said.

It is 75 years since Yorta Yorta activist William Cooper organised the petition, which calls on the king to "intervene on our behalf" to "prevent the

extinction of the Aboriginal Race and better conditions for all..."

Mr Cooper founded the Australian Aborigines' League in 1933 and worked well into his 70s, agitating for Indigenous justice in letters, newspaper articles and speeches.

He collected 1814 signatures on his petition to King George V despite active obstruction from the national and state governments of the day. It was handed



A copy of William Cooper's original petition from 1934.

to the Commonwealth Government in August 1937, but was prevented by the Cabinet from ever reaching its destination.

Now, finally, his grandson has handed it over to the Governor-General, who told Mr Turner he would see that it gets to England.

"It's the result I wanted," Mr Turner said, "because all I wanted to do was to get that petition to where my grandfather wanted."