



**Aboriginal mourning ceremony, Melville Island**

he shot and grenaded the defenders out of their holes." For his work on that day, for his total disregard for his own safety, his remarkable bravery, coolness and initiative, and for the example which he set to his comrades, Hughes was awarded the Military Medal.

No less than this great courage, but of a different kind, was that shown by a man known as Neighbour some 30 years before in a vastly different setting. Mounted-Constable William Johns of the Northern Territory Police was escorting four prisoners from Hodgson's Downs to Pine Creek. As he crossed the Wilton River, crocodile-infested and in flood, Johns's horse was swept off its feet and in its struggles it kicked him unconscious. Neighbour, one of the prisoners, at once plunged into the river and, after a terrific struggle with the wild waters, brought his unconscious captor safely to the bank—and then ran miles for assistance. For this he was awarded the Albert Medal.

Thus the situation calls forth the man. In each of these situations the man was of the Australian aboriginal race. Similarly, many others of these people have distinguished themselves.

When Matthew Flinders sailed around Australia in 1801-2, an aboriginal named Bungaree was with him. Flinders referred to him with affection and admiration as "a worthy and brave fellow". Similarly, Yuranigh evoked the warmest feelings of Sir Thomas Mitchell during his great journey from Boree in New South Wales to the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1845. Mitchell described Yuranigh as his "guide, companion, counsellor and friend . . . of most determined courage and resolution. His intelligence and judgment rendered him so necessary to me that he was ever at my elbow . . . Confidence in him was never misplaced". So, to this day, a monument to Yuranigh remains at Molong, New South Wales.

In 1844 Edward John Eyre, unable to find good grazing land on a great journey into Central Australia, sent the main part of his expedition back to Adelaide. But he himself continued on with another white man, Baxter, and three aborigines to look after the pack horses and

the few sheep which remained to the expedition. One of these aborigines was named Wylie. When, later, two of the men shot the sleeping Baxter and stole the expedition's guns and most of its stores, Wylie warned Eyre and remained beside him during the long pursuit by the two armed and desperate men. For two months and five days Eyre journeyed over 600 miles of harsh lonely country, surviving only through the help and devotion of Wylie.

In 1848 Edmund Kennedy set out from Rockingham Bay, overland to Cape York. The party consisted of 14 men, one of them an aboriginal named Galmarra, better known now as Jacky Jacky, who had been with Sir Thomas Mitchell on several of his expeditions. Only three of the 14 men in the party survived. Kennedy himself was speared in several places and died from his wounds. Until his death Jacky Jacky cared for him most faithfully and then himself carried the body until he was completely worn out by hunger and fatigue. Then he buried it reverently; and himself eventually reached the coast with news of the tragedy.

Of similar faithfulness and endurance was Tommy Windich, who went with John and Alexander Forrest on their expeditions into inland Australia in 1870 and



**Individual and tribal conduct was determined by councils of elders**

1874. They described him as "an aboriginal of intelligence and fidelity" and John Forrest himself wrote, "Of Tommy Windich, I cannot speak too highly . . . Accompanying me on the trip across, suffering often from want of water, he showed every energy and determination deserving the highest praise."

The aboriginal women were worthy of their men. A girl, Narrabeen, in the early days of Sydney, was working for a settler named Reynolds and his family near the area north of Sydney now called (after her) Narrabeen. At this time escaped convicts were at large in the bush. Narrabeen overheard one such named Big Mick plotting against the Reynolds family. She warned them but they disregarded her warnings. Big Mick and his party killed them and some of their aboriginal friends. Narrabeen spread the alarm, carrying news of the tragedy to an Army Camp at Manly and, as a result, all of the murderers were either killed or captured.