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 wounded 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
1874. They described him as “an aboriginal of intelli-
gence 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.