MR BILL ONUS yesterday clasped the hand of his smallest and youngest supporter at the start of the "Vote Yes for Aboriginal Rights" march.

The boy is John Bennett, 3, of Park Orchards.

Mr Onus met John outside the National Gallery just before the city lunch-hour procession began.

Mr Onus, president of the Victorian Aborigines' Advancement League, was the only aboriginal to take part in the march.

Marchers were students mainly.

Mr Onus said he had not expected many aboriginals at the march as most would not have been able to leave their work.

"We think and hope that most people have already made up their minds on this issue in our favor," Mr Onus said.

"But if we lose this, then it will most certainly be an indictment against the Australian people."

A referendum will be held today on the question of allowing the Federal Government to make laws for aboriginals, and to allow them to be counted in the Census.