



The Federal Redistribution 2003
South Australia



Public Objection number 1

Aaron Barrett

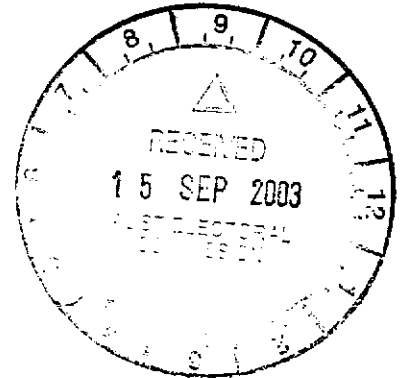
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Dr Christopher Drury
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Dear Dr Drury

SOUTH AUSTRALIA REDISTRIBUTION 2003

With regard to your initial proposals for the above, I believe the Redistribution Committee adopted the correct alternative in abolishing a Division in the northern sector of the Adelaide metropolitan area. Based upon speculation that has persisted in South Australia and elsewhere since the last redistribution of your State (in 1999), it has been clear for some time that this was a likely outcome.

However, I remain disappointed – as, I am certain, do many others – that the Redistribution Committee has seen fit to discontinue the use of *Bonython* as a Division name. Sir Langdon Bonython (1848-1939), through his proprietorship of *The Adelaide Advertiser*, was a leading exponent of Federation in the Colony of South Australia (although Sir Charles Kingston is, quite properly, regarded as the 'Father of Federation' in S.A.). In March 1901, he was the second candidate (of seven) declared elected to the House of Representatives for the single Electorate of South Australia.

Retiring after two terms in Federal Parliament (including one as the inaugural Member for *Barker*), Bonython became a successful lawyer and barrister in Great Britain and South Australia, and a noted benefactor of local institutions. He is renowned throughout Australia for his many financial contributions towards the development of the University of Adelaide, and for his donation of £100,000 to the State of South Australia to allow for the completion of construction of Parliament House in Adelaide.

Sir Langdon Bonython was a truly eminent figure on the South Australian historical and political stage. Discontinuance of the use of his name as a Divisional name should be regarded as akin to the discontinuance of the Divisional names *Forrest*, *Griffith*, *Fisher*, *Barton*, *Reid*, *Parkes*, *Watson*, *Deakin*, *Isaacs* or *Braddon* (or, indeed, *Kingston*). In this day and age, any move to eliminate one or all of those names could only be contemplated in the face of very determined public opposition.

I am also aware that Divisions bearing the names *Parkes* and *Watson* were abolished in 1969 (and replaced by Divisions bearing the names *Chifley* and *Prospect*) by the Redistribution Committee for New South Wales. However, the name *Parkes* was re-commissioned as a Division name 15 years and two redistributions later, while *Watson* was re-commissioned as a Division name 9 years and two redistributions after that.

I would urge the Augmented Electoral Commission to consider one of the following options when reviewing objections to the Redistribution Committee's proposals:

- Renaming the proposed Division of *Port Adelaide* as *Bonython*.

Although the guidelines for the naming of Divisions, as laid down by the JSCEM after its 1995 Inquiry, state that "qualifying names may be used where appropriate" (and specifically mention *Port Adelaide*), they also state (more prominently) that "locality or place names should generally be avoided". The Division of *Port Adelaide* was originally created in 1949, with the new Division's entire territories having previously been located in the Division of *Hindmarsh*. *Port Adelaide* was one of four new Divisions created in South Australia in 1949 following the enlargement of Federal Parliament, and was the only such Division *not* named for a prominent ex-citizen. *Bonython* could well have been used on that occasion, but instead was kept in reserve until 1955 when South Australia was next entitled to an additional seat in the House of Representatives.

The perpetuation of the names of prominent citizens in the House of Representatives is also not without precedent in other States of the Commonwealth. In 1969, the Victorian inner-metropolitan Division of *Scullin* was abolished and replaced by the outer-metropolitan Division of *Burke*. In order to perpetuate the name of James Henry Scullin in Parliament, it was decided that the Division of Darebin would be immediately renamed in his honour. In 1969, the Division name *Isaacs* was also transferred – from an abolished inner-metropolitan Division centred on St Kilda to a new outer-metropolitan Division centred on Mentone and Mordialloc. 26 years later, in deciding that "names of divisions should not be ... transferred to new areas without very strong reasons", the JSCEM was implicitly stating (albeit perhaps unintentionally) that the perpetuation of suitable names in the House of Representatives was just such a "very strong reason".

The guidelines for the naming of Divisions also state that "the names of Commonwealth Divisions should not duplicate existing State Districts". I know that this did not occur when *Port Adelaide* was named in 1949, but I am also aware that the South Australian State Electoral Office has recently renamed the District of Hart as Port Adelaide.

- Renaming the proposed Division of *Sturt* as *Bonython*.


Between 1949 and 1955, the Division of *Sturt* was a vast, rambling Electorate stretching from Glen Osmond in the south to Elizabeth in the north via the communities of Burnside, Magill, Payneham, Gilles Plains, Pooraka, Para Hills and Salisbury.

In 1955, that section of the Division from Payneham to Elizabeth (inclusive) was transferred into South Australia's new electorate along with the communities of Elizabeth Downs and Munno Para from the Division of *Wakefield*. The new Division was, of course, named *Bonython*.

Recent research and intellectual debate has also uncovered the 'suspicion' that perhaps *Sturt* is not such an appropriate name for a Federal Division as the famous explorer's name could actually have been Charles Crapp. The possibility that future Speakers of the House may well end up awarding the Call to the "Member for Crapp" is not one savoured by electoral traditionalists, although many tabloid journalists might find the prospect appealing.

Thanking you for your indulgence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Barrett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Aaron Barrett