



The Federal Redistribution 2009
QUEENSLAND



**Comment Number 11
on Objections**

Richard and Jeanette Sims

5 pages

From: Dick Sims [dicksims@ozemail.com.au]
Sent: Thursday, 3 September 2009 4:49 PM
To: QLD Redistribution
Subject: Comment on Lulia Lang's objection to new electorate naming
Attachments: Email to Redistribution Secretariat for Queensland.doc

Dear Senior Project Officer
Redistribution Secretariate

Thursday Sept 3 2009

Attached are comments on the objection by Julia Lang to the intended naming of the new Queensland electorate "Wright". We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on Lulia's objection. We trust that the comments are appropriate and that they will be born in mind in determining the final name of the new Queensland electorate. If we can assist further our email address is dicksims@ozemail.com.au Phone 02 9498 1457 fax 02 9418 2123. With thanks Richard and Jeanette Sims

Email to Redistribution Secretariat for Queensland
Senior Project Officer

Tues 01 09 2009

Subject Comment on objection by Julia Lang regarding the naming of the new Queensland Electorate “Wright” – after Judith Wright an Australian Poet - rather than naming the Electorate “Waters” after her father Len Warters, Australia’s only RAAF Aboriginal Fighter Pilot, and who flew his Kittyhawk fighter on 95 operational missions in defence of Australia.

Dear Senior Project Officer

My wife Jeanette Sims and I wish to strongly support the request by Julia Lang, by way of comment on Julia’s objection, that the new Queensland Electorate not be named “Wright” commemorating Judith Wright, but be named “Warters” after her father Warrant Officer Leonard Waters, Australia’s only Aboriginal Fighter Pilot who flew 95 operational sorties in his Kittyhawk fighter against the Japanese in wartime.

Judith Wright is a notable Australian Poet and worthy of significant recognition, but a more suitable accolade would be something closer to academia than a political electorate bearing her name.

A political electorate is a strong image of our democratic system. Len Waters volunteered his services and risked his life on 95 occasions flying his Kittyhawk fighter on highly dangerous missions in wartime in defence of our democratic system, at a time when that democratic system denied him the vote. He was much “bigger and more politically generous” then, than our democratic system that he fought to defend. We the Australian people owe him a debt of gratitude and it is time we repaid it in recognizing his ultimate faith in our democracy, by naming the new Queensland electorate after this true Australian Aboriginal hero.

His Aboriginality is another strong reason to comment favourably on Julia Lang’s objection. Len Waters is far and away the most recognized and highly regarded wartime Aboriginal hero of the Australia wide indigenous people. To now reward Len and compliment the Indigenous people across

Australia, by perpetuating the memory of his name in calling the new electorate after him, would surely add greatly to Aboriginal respect for the justice of our political system.

Additional favourable comment on Julia's objection can be found in the fact of Len Water's life long association with Queensland. The new electorate is a Queensland electorate and Len Warters was a life long Queensland man. While Len was born in an Aboriginal community in northern NSW he grew up and was educated in Nindigully near St George in Queensland. He spent the rest of his life living and working in Queensland, including raising his family in Inala over a period of thirty years. He only left Queensland for his military service and occasional shearing jobs in NSW and Victoria.

While Judith Wright did spend twenty years of her life living in Brisbane she was born in NSW, went to school in the New England district and University in Sydney. She spent the last Thirty years of her life in Braidwood in Southern NSW. Len has extensive family and relatives living in Southern Queensland and in Brisbane. His widow Gladys still lives in Inala. Len is buried in St George. He was a true son of Queensland.

Apart from his piloting skills Len had other little known immense achievements upon which I would like to comment, such comment being relevant to Julia's objection to naming the new electorate "Wright" rather than "Waters". During his RAAF 78 Squadron service in the Halmahera Islands flying operational missions, the American military organized an interservice (Australian vs American military) boxing competition. Len won the welter weight championship. His wife Gladys has a photo of Len wearing his championship belt.

I later flew with one of Len's 78 Squadron mates , F/Lt Robert Crawford, who watch the fight. Bob Crawford told me his Squadron mates were surprised when Len told them he had entered the competition and were doubly stunned when he knocked out an American Negro professional boxer to win the title. They had no idea Len had immense boxing skills and he had very little chance to train during the previous six months while, flying missions against the Japanese.

Contrary to Google Len did fly an aircraft once since his wartime service. I had the honour of flying with Len in a former United States Navy SNJ5, the

American equivalent of the Australian Wirraway in which Len trained to gain his RAAF wings.

Len flew the aircraft in the skies around Camden NSW for an hour and a half when he had not flown another aircraft for fifty years. He flew with immaculate precision and accuracy performing the full range of aerobatic manoeuvres to an unbelievably polished standard. After we landed I hugged Len Waters, he had a tear in his eye and so did I. If ever there was a natural pilot it was Len Waters, Flying skills like hunting skills were naturally in his aboriginal blood.

Jeanette wishes to add this comment on Julia's objection. I first discovered Len through University work on Aboriginal Studies. Realising he had been a war time pilot and my husband had access to an SNJ5, I contacted Len in Cunamulla and offered to collect him, bring him to stay with us in Killara in Sydney and that Dick would take him to fly in the SNJ5. Len jumped at the chance and in gratitude he presented me with an Emu Egg on which he had sculptured the "Per Ardua" RAAF crest. The egg is among my most valued possessions.

Based on the warming effect, the accuracy and precision and power of the sculpture, I believe it is fair to say that, had he had the opportunity to be trained and his sculpturing gift professionally developed, Len Waters could have been regarded as an Australian Rodin. How tragic this never happened.

My last comment on Julia's objection is to say that if the people of Queensland were aware of Julia's objection and of these comments, I and Jeanette have made, I believe they would bring the house down to have the small honour requested by Julia to be bestowed upon her father. to be so bestowed.

Some years ago Len entered a Brisbane Radio state wide singing competition to discover the best Queensland amateur non professional singer. Gladys has a tape of Len singing "I love you as I never loved before Since first I met you on the village green" --he won the competition -- He could sing like Perry Como.

Please don't pass up the opportunity to grant Len and his family and the wider Aboriginal Australian community the small and so well deserved honour requested by Julia's objection. Len Waters is, believe me. an

unrecognized and so far un rewarded Australian potential genius. There will be plenty of opportunities to compensate the memory of Judith Wright in a possibly more appropriate manner.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on Julia's objection.

Signed

Richard Sims

Jeanette Sims

PS I will post the signed copy.