



Comment on objections 21

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6 pages

To The Electoral Commission for the Australian Capital Territory.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the objections/submissions made to the Commission on the proposed redistribution and proposed names of the new electorates.

It is, ultimately, a matter for the AEC to determine whether the new electorate to be created in the AEC is named after Dr C.E.W. Bean or bears some other name.

Nevertheless, as one of the two grandchildren of Dr Bean (the other being my brother Edward Bean Le Couteur), I believe I have a familial obligation to him and our fond and respectful memory of him and his values, and also a public responsibility, to respond to a number of significantly-adverse, unfounded and ill-informed comments made by some in response to the proposal to name the new electorate in his honour, both in the formal objections to the AEC and in the media.

It is understandable that this has occurred and that some submissions rely upon an incorrect quote which appears in the entry on Charles Bean in Wikipedia and in books by authors who are, at times, selective in their choice of material and context when praising Monash and traducing others.

Some of the submissions employ the following quote:

"We do not want Australia represented by men mainly because of their ability; natural or inborn in Jews to push themselves."

The full and correct quote from Bean's personal diary is:

*"But Monash for an Australian Commander in Chief we cannot have. He is not the man. The purity and absence of jealousy and political intrigue in Birdwood's administration is worth anything. There is no 'eyewash' – bluff and humbug and insincerity in it; and there is in Monash's. White would do, but not Monash. **Besides** we do not want Australia represented by men mainly because of their ability, natural and inborn in Jews, to push themselves." (Diary AWM38 3DRL 606/91/1 - October 1917 page 65,*

Omitting "**Besides**" distorts and fails to acknowledge that there were significant other factors, as itemised in the full quote.

On other occasions Charles Bean praises General Monash.

- **Submission:** *"Bean was a war correspondent and war historian. His contribution is associated with war. Electoral divisions should not be associated with war or writings about war."*

Charles Bean's contribution to Australia and Australians was not confined to his military works.

“However, we sell him (Bean) short, and deprive ourselves of important insights, if we limit our vision of Charles Bean to the military sphere. (Item 5 “HAVING A VOICE: CEW BEAN AS A SOCIAL MISSIONARY” .See below for full reference).

See also "*Bearing Witness The remarkable life of Charles Bean, Australia's greatest war correspondent*" by Peter Rees.

Principally I refer the Commission to the work of Justice Geoff Lindsay who has made a detailed study of Charles Bean. From his papers, I have selected brief extracts but it is the complete works from which these extracts are taken that are submitted.

- “BE SUBSTANTIALLY GREAT IN THY SELF: Getting to Know C.E.W. Bean; Barrister, Judge's Associate, Moral Philosopher” by Geoff Lindsay S.C.

<http://www.forbessociety.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/bean.pdf>

“That general determination – to stand by one's mate, and to see that he gets a fair deal whatever the cost to one's self – means more to Australia than can yet be reckoned. It was the basis of our economy in two world wars and is probably its main basis in peace time. Whatever the results (and they are sometimes uncomfortable), may it long be the country's code”.

C E W Bean, *On The Wool Track* (Sydney, 1963 revised ed.), p 132. [Emphasis added] page 1.

- “A Literary Event: The Launch of *Bearing Witness* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2015) by Peter Rees by Justice Geoff Lindsay (A Judge of the Supreme Court of NSW; Secretary, Francis Forbes Society for Australian Legal History) at Tuggeranong Homestead, Sunday, 12 April 2015.”

http://www.supremecourt.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Publications/Speeches/2015%20Speeches/lindsay_20150412.pdf

“Bean was an uncompromising seeker of truth. Throughout his life, and in everything he did, he sought “Truth” at every level of abstraction; in everything, large and small.” (Item 19)

- “THE FORGOTTEN CEW BEAN:
A THESIS FOR REFLECTION: A FULL APPRECIATION OF CEW BEAN MUST
ACCOMMODATE THE “SOCIAL MISSIONARY” AS WELL AS THE
WAR CORRESPONDENT”

http://www.supremecourt.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Publications/Speeches/2016%20Speeches/Lindsay_20161110_2.pdf November 2016

“Through Bean’s voluminous writings we can chart the personal growth of a thoughtful man, and the growth of Australia as a nation, from the insularity of the White Australia Policy at the time of Federation in 1901 to acceptance of full membership of the world community in the 1960s. The fires of war burnt away prejudices that predated them.”
(Item 16)

“In the heat of the Second World War Bean publicly criticised the Australian government for demonising the Japanese enemy. In the wake of that war, he repudiated “race” as a foundation for discrimination between peoples and he embraced immigration as a necessity for an Australia open to the world. His growth, and that of the nation, was, and is, the product of the two world wars and deep reflection on the interconnectedness of people everywhere.” (Items 17 and 18)

*“An impediment to our ability to get to know Bean in full measure, and to chart his growth (and our own), is the absence of republished versions of a monograph he published at the end of World War I, and another as he anticipated the end of World War II. **Each bore the character of a personal letter to all Australians, urging the nation to embrace social improvement.** In *Your Hands, Australians* was published in 1918 and republished in 1919.”*(Emphasis added)

War Aims of a Plain Australian was published in 1943 and republished in 1945. (Items 22 and 23)

- “HAVING A VOICE: CEW BEAN AS A SOCIAL MISSIONARY “.

http://www.supremecourt.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Publications/Speeches/2017%20Speeches/Lindsay_20170420.pdf April 2017.

*“Conscious of grand strategies and broad themes, his natural predisposition was to convey meaning through personal stories. **He was respected by his contemporaries, and he continues to be respected, because of his quiet, consistent displays of courage (physical and moral); his dedication to Truth as he saw it; and his devotion to public service. It is fit and proper that we remember CEW Bean in this context.** However, we sell him short, and deprive ourselves of important insights, if we limit our vision of Charles Bean to the military sphere.”*(Item 5) (Emphasis added)

“His constancy of character, his personal growth in the opinions he held, and his role in shaping national opinion provide a means of calibrating national change.” (Item 3 “THE FORGOTTEN CEW BEAN”).

To further assist the Commission and to address some of the objections I refer to the following publication:

- **“Charles Bean: Man, Myth, Legacy”**

Edited by Professor Peter Stanley

Published in August 2017 leading military historians analyse the man, the myth, and his long-reaching legacy.

“Bean was (also) a public servant, institutional leader, author, activist, thinker, doer, philosopher, and polemicist.”

It contains a paper by Peter Rees on the non-military aspect of Charles Bean and a paper by Jennifer Horsfield of MOTH (Mindors of Tuggeranong Homestead) about the history writing team's time at Tuggeranong, located in the proposed new electorate.

<https://www.newsouthbooks.com.au/books/charles-beans-legacy/>

Objection ...*“To add insult to injury the Canberra suburb of Monash will be in the new electorate of Bean which seems extremely inappropriate. Monash was a great man and to have him included in anything to do with Charles Bean seems almost insulting.”*

In response the following are submitted:

“Drawing on “Here, My Son,” we can fairly take “The Arnold Tradition” to which Charles Bean subscribed to have been a form of Christian humanism of a democratic (albeit patrician) kind, emphasising individual self worth and qualities associated with “good character”: trust and reliability, honesty, openness, self-discipline, self-reliance, independent thought and action, friendship, and concern for the common good over selfish or sectional interests.” Item 52 A Literary Event : The Launch of Bearing Witness

“, ..., Bean and Monash had need of one another. Neither could do his best work without actively engaging the other. A strained working relationship was tempered, ultimately, by mutual respect.” Item 78 “A Literary Event : The Launch of Bearing Witness”

“A consistent theme in Bean’s thinking is his recognition of a need for evidence-based problem solving, directed to the common good, with effective planning of programmes for better systems of education, town planning and healthier lifestyles for everyone” (Item 8 “HAVING A VOICE: CEW BEAN AS A SOCIAL MISSIONARY”).

“The full significance of this perspective of Australia’s iconic war correspondent cannot be appreciated unless we take time to know the man. Brief though it is, this paper invites

Australians to invest time in that task. It is a task that can pay dividends in understanding of national heritage.” (Item 9 HAVING A VOICE: CEW BEAN AS A SOCIAL MISSIONARY”)

And the following quotes from Charles Bean:

C.E.W. Bean wrote to Keith Murdoch in a letter dated 2.6.1918, which included the following:

“But Monash is a very capable man, a Clem Hill, or a Bardsley. And as he is there now and further change would do no good, as things are, I intend to work loyally by him.”(AWM38 3DRL 606/113/1 May-June 1918 page 53)

“I (Bean)urged him (Hughes) that it was all important to get some plan of repatriation ...drawn up by the A.I.F. at the earliest possible moment- put Monash in charge-Birdwood is not the man for it at all. It was urgent, I said, if they did not want a catastrophe.” 13 Oct (AWM38 3DRL 606/117/1 Sept to December 1918)

By the early 1930s Monash supported the conferring of a Doctor of Literature degree from Melbourne University on Bean and praised his Official History as a “great work”.

And the following communication between General Monash and Charles Bean as documented in (“BEARING WITNESS The remarkable life of CHARLES BEAN, Australia’s greatest war correspondent.” Peter Rees 2015 page 451)

The *Smith’s Weekly* incident (1930) regarding the articles written by a journalist under General Monash’s name.

“A concerned Bean penned a letter to Monash advising him (Monash) to repudiate the articles as his work. “I would urge you, for the sake of your own reputation...to be cautious in your interviews with the press... and give them something that we can all feel is really worthy of your great calibre of mind and of the very great position which you occupied.”

“Bean wanted Monash to know that his ‘frank reply’ was written with good will towards him ‘and solely from care of that precious thing which you and I and some others have to some extent in our keeping – the great name of the AIF.”

“Responding, Monash acknowledged that he was ‘very much indebted to Bean for his ‘helpful and understanding’ letter, and that he had been right to take strong exception to aspects of the articles, and that “I greatly appreciate your entire goodwill towards myself.” (Emphasis added)

Monash tried to bluff his way out of the situation, distributing a statement to senior officers and secretaries of the RSL and service clubs in each state requesting that his’ disclaimer of the language and many of the sentiments‘ in the articles be made widely known. It all back fired when *Smith’s Weekly* refuted Monash’s disclaimer by reproducing his editorial amendments to the manuscript.”

The insightful, well rounded, fact-packed biography of Charles Bean appears in volume 7 of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (at pages 226-229), authored by Professor KS Inglis.

“Bean had a strong moral compass, grounded in an equally strong family tradition. It coloured everything he saw, everything he did.” (Item 13 of “HAVING A VOICE: CEW BEAN AS A SOCIAL MISSIONARY”.)

Yours sincerely

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