



Objection 49

The Hon Mike Kelly AM MP

2 pages

SUBMISSION REGARDING NAMING OF NEW ACT DIVISION OF “BEAN”

I wish to register my objection to the naming of the new ACT division after C.E.W Bean. This is for the following reasons:

- The naming of Federal Electoral Divisions should be based on individuals who not only have made significant contributions to the nation but also who can be held up as admirable role models who showed leadership. While no one is perfect and people should be viewed in the context of their time, those who we name divisions after should be people who have been shown to have stood out against what were clearly significantly wrong attitudes of their day.
- While contributing greatly to the preservation of our national story Bean had a clear record of racism throughout his life and most particularly was stridently anti-Semitic. This anti-Semitism played out most notably through the enormous amount of energy he committed to attempting to prevent Sir John Monash from becoming the commander of Australian forces on the Western Front in WWI and to having Monash removed when he was so appointed.
- Perhaps the most heinous aspect of Bean’s efforts to deny Monash this appointment in conjunction with the journalist Keith Murdoch, was that he had no expertise, experience or professional knowledge that qualified him to make such a judgement. He did not fight in the war, did not command troops and had no role whatsoever in any aspect of planning or management of the war or logistic aspects of it.
- If Bean had been successful in his efforts to deny Monash command Australia would not only have been forever condemned in history but thousands of Australian soldiers who owed their lives to the more effective planning and tactics that Monash pioneered would not have survived the war to return to their families. Beyond that the lessons learned right across the Front by other commanders from Monash resulted in the preservation of many other allied lives as well.
- The fact that Australia did appoint Monash to the highest command despite his religion and ethnic background was a tremendous step forward towards the multicultural success story we have become. Bean would have set us back along that path in not only this but his attitude to Asians.
- For Bean’s undoubted achievements he has already been well acknowledged in a number of ways, particularly and most appropriately in the naming of one of the facilities at the Australian War Memorial.

- I also believe that there is a totally unacceptable imbalance in the naming of Australian electoral division where I believe only 10 of the 150 seats are named after women. This imbalance must be addressed and this is the perfect opportunity to do so. I would like to suggest that a more appropriate name for the new Canberra division that would also resonate with the ACT and the nation is **Betty Churcher AO**. Her contributions to the cultural life of this nation and to our national gallery in Canberra are unquestionable and she very much earned such recognition.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

The Hon Mike Kelly, AM MP

Federal Member for Eden Monaro