



Objection 71

Ryan Seccull

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As a resident of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and as someone with a deep interest in history, I feel sadly yet strongly compelled to write to object to the proposed naming of the new federal electorate in the ACT.

I am most definitely aware of Charles Bean's role in writing *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* and note the connect of this to the proposed electorate as it was written in Tuggeranong, and his role in establishing the Australian War Memorial, which is of great significance to the ACT and the nation.

My deep concern is around Bean's anti-Semitism, which is well known in historiography.

This was most notable in his efforts to prevent John Monash from being appointed commander of the Australian Corps – I would note regardless of his motivation, this is behaviour unbecoming of a historian.

In December 1917, his anti-Semitism was displayed when writing of Monash, he wrote

Monash has his capacities, great lucidity in grasping what has to be done and explaining it; but such a desire to make out the best case for himself after the event, that he accepts any pretty story which is put up to him. His ambition makes him an underground engineer: he has the Jewish capacity of worming silently into favour without seeming to take any steps towards it, although many are beginning to suspect that he does take steps.

Bean further added in his diary

We do not want Australia represented by men mainly because of the ability, natural and inborn in Jews, to push themselves forward.

Given Bean is widely known to have held these sentiments, I am concerned that there is a risk to Australia's reputation if the new electorate is named Bean.

I understand that such views were more common in the past, and any assessment of Bean should be done with an understanding of the attitudes of the time. However, there are many other worthy candidates who have made a significant contribution to the nation and also have a connection to the ACT; I strongly urge your consideration of any of them who do not share the same problematic history as Bean.

I thank you for your time in the consideration of this submission