



Suggestion 67

Professor Helen Lee

3 pages

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TO: AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

RE: FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION IN VICTORIA

Aboriginal Studies of La Trobe University is writing to make a public submission about the **naming** of the proposed new federal electorate in Victoria following the 2021 redistribution.

Our suggestion for the name of the new electorate is **TUCKER**.

This name would honour the outstanding lifetime service to her country of the late **Margaret Lilardia Tucker MBE** (Yorta Yorta and Wiradjuri descent).

Following are reasons for this suggestion:

1. Margaret Tucker (1904 – 1996) is revered in the Aboriginal community of Victoria. Her contribution to advancing Aboriginal people through literature (her autobiography *If Everyone Cared*), film (*Lousy Little Sixpence*) and the Yorta Yorta Aboriginal language has been taught within the curriculums of Aboriginal Studies, Anthropology, Linguistics, English Literature, History, Women and Gender Studies at La Trobe University for over thirty years. She is acknowledged as a leading figure of the 20th century in Australia.
2. Tucker was a leading Aboriginal activist and civil rights campaigner who worked alongside Pastor Doug Nicholls and William Cooper. (For example, Tucker was an organiser of the 1938 National Day of Mourning.) Nicholls and Cooper have both been honoured with Victorian electorate names but Tucker has not received equal recognition for work of equal value, accomplishment and community esteem.
3. Tucker was internationally renowned for her leading role as a civil rights campaigner, invited to the US on a public speaking tour (1957).
4. Tucker's autobiography *If Everyone Cared* (1977) is the first written account of being forcibly removed from her Aboriginal mother, her harsh treatment as a young girl living as a domestic working for non-Aboriginal families are accounts of survival, her experience today is known as *The Stolen Generations* (1977).

5. Tucker was the first Aboriginal woman to be appointed to the Victorian Aborigines Welfare Board (1964) and later join the Commonwealth Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (1968). She also served on the Aboriginal Land Council of Victoria and the Victorian Government's Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee.
6. Tucker was instrumental in establishing the influential Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Organisation that worked across Melbourne with Aboriginal organisations during the Self-Determination era of the Whitlam Government (1970s).
7. Tucker's leadership and support was critical in establishing the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (1973) and was a patron of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.
8. Tucker was inducted to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, among the first to receive the honour (2001).
9. Tucker's service to the state of Victoria was recognised when she was inducted on the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll in 2011.
10. Tucker's service to the Commonwealth was recognised when she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1968.
11. Tucker fulfils all the criteria for naming Federal Electoral Divisions.
12. Only 5 out of 38 Federal Electoral Divisions in Victoria (13%) are named after women alone.
13. Only 17 out of 150 Federal Electoral Divisions in Australia (11%) are named after women alone.
14. Only 6 Federal Electoral Divisions in Australia are named after a First Nations person.
15. The Australian values of fairness, equality and justice demand that the AEC work towards gender parity in the naming of Federal Electoral Divisions. The naming of each and every new division is a step along the way (or a step backwards) in this pursuit of equality.

Thank you for considering the Aboriginal Studies, La Trobe University submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require a fuller explanation of any of the above points, or more evidence-based information or documentation of the facts as set out before you.

Kind regards,

Dr Julie Andrews