RE Objection to the application by the Australia First Party (NSW) to use a representation of the Eureka flag as its logo.

I write as an academic historian, who has devoted decades of study into the use and symbolism of the Southern Cross flag first flown at Ballarat in November 1854, usually known as the Eureka Flag.

I rely on section 129A of the Electoral Act 1918, which provides the AEC with a power to refuse to enter a logo of the party in the Register under section 129A.

As I have suggested in numerous academic and popular articles, the Eureka Flag is a symbol of Australian nationalism and democracy, which unites people from many lands. It was a multi-national rallying symbol in 1854, when so many ethnic groups were represented on the Victorian goldfields.

Since then, the flag has been a popular symbol of protest, available to all, but not associated with any one group. It has been acknowledged over the generations as ‘a flag of protest’, available to all. Thus I think it is entirely wrong that one political party, the Australia First Party (NSW) should attempt to register the Eureka Flag as its logo, and thus claim exclusive usage of an inclusive symbol.

As a member of the community of Federation University of Australia, I bring your attention to the logo of the university, which is a representation of the Eureka Flag. (You will see the Eureka Flag represented prominently on the Federation University website and on University stationary.) This is a wonderful conjunction of the university’s current educational aims with the historic city of Ballarat and the aims of the Ballarat Reform League of 1854 in pressing for justice and equality for all peoples living on the goldfields.

There is a serious possibility that the logo proposed by the Australia First Party (NSW) could be confused with the logo of Federation University. Given the anti-immigration views of the Australia First Party, this message is directly in opposition with the message of Federation University, which welcomes students and staff from all nations.

I am also aware that a number of other organisations have used the Eureka Flag as their logo. Most notably the organisation Eureka’s Children, consisting of descendants of those involved at the Eureka Stockade. I am also aware that the City of Ballarat has used the flag in publicity material, and flies the Eureka Flag above the Town Hall every day.

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka (M.A.D.E.) is a guardian of the correct use of the Eureka Flag, as is the Art Gallery of Ballarat, custodian of the original Eureka Flag.

For all these reasons, I submit that the application by Australia First (NSW) to claim exclusive use of the Eureka Flag on such an important document as a Senate Electoral Form, is totally wrong and
reprehensible, and must be refused on the grounds that the Eureka Flag is a symbol for all Australians, regardless of political party allegiance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Anne Beggs-Sunter,
Lecturer in History,
Federation University Ballarat.
PO Box 663, Ballarat, Vic. 3352