



Submission FOB130

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To the Augmented Australian Electoral Commission

By email

2024 PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL DIVISIONS IN TASMANIA

This is a submission (in the wording of the Act, an ‘objection’) to the announcement on Wednesday 15 July 2026 that the new electoral division in Tasmania representing a substantial portion of the current electoral division of Franklin should be renamed Tongerlongeter.

There are two reasons why I object to this proposal.

INADEQUATE CONSULTATION

The augmented AEC published its proposal at 10 am on 15 July 2026 and has advised that the public can provide written submissions via the AEC website “until 11.59 pm (AEST) on Tuesday 21 July 2026”. Elsewhere on the website is the statement that any objections must be lodged, because of the provisions of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (CEA), by “6 pm on the day submissions close”.

Section 72(12) of the CEA provides for a period of 7 days beginning on the day of the announcement for people to lodge a written further objection. In this case, because the augmented AEC has chosen to publish the announcement on a Wednesday, the effective ‘consultation period’ becomes only four working days, not including the day of the announcement.

Whilst the AEC states on the website it is constrained by the legislative provisions, *it is* in control of when the announcement is made.

Putting aside the conflicting advice on the website as to the time by which submissions must be received, I submit that four working days are completely insufficient.

It has been judicially said that inadequate consultation may amount to no consultation, and I consider the actions of the AEC in this regard fall into this category.

In addition, apart from a passing reference that submissions by post “may not” be received in time to be considered, the augmented AEC’s timetable effectively rules out any submissions other than those lodged on-line. This is discriminatory and not the practice I would expect of a Commonwealth agency.

The very reason the Parliament changed the postal provisions in the Evidence Act was to reflect the fact that Australia Post no longer provides daily mail delivery services. This change would be known to the AEC and should be considered when announcing redistributions and providing adequate time for public submissions.

I submit that inadequate consultation in this case is a denial of procedural fairness.

Additional point

The augmented AEC's statement states that the reason it decided to allow further objections to the proposal was because of the change of name of Franklin to Tongerlongeter, which the augmented Commission determined was a 'significant change.'

I would submit the change to remove the Municipality of Break O'Day from Lyons and place it in Bass is also a significant change to the proposal published earlier this year.

THE PROPOSED NAME

The augmented AEC notes that the guidelines for the naming of electoral divisions state as a principle that where possible the names of Federation seats should be preserved. Tasmania had no individual seats in 1901 but did from 1903 and Franklin was one of them. It is therefore a 'Federation seat' in the Tasmanian context.

The principal population centres of the division of Franklin are currently the City of Clarence and the Municipality of Kingborough. If the proposed new boundaries are adopted, Kingborough will be within the boundaries of the division of Clark. However, Clarence, the major population centre of Franklin, does not move. The change of name to those voters is unnecessary and will be confusing.

There is no expressed reason in the augmented AEC's statement for abolishing the name of Franklin, other than a milky statement that Sir John Franklin is honoured in other places.

It is evident that the "retirement" of the name Franklin, to use the misleading word in the statement, was a fait accompli, given that only four names were considered by the Commission, none of which was the existing name.

Sir John Franklin is a major figure in the development of Van Diemen's Land and Tasmania and was *the* most significant person of the time to be Lieutenant-Governor. The augmented AEC acknowledges his prominence but then does not explain why it wants to discard his name.

In reference to the important Tasmanian Aboriginal leader, Tongerlongeter, I submit that the augmented AEC has applied non-robust scholarship in deciding that the division of Franklin should be renamed to commemorate him.

Tongerlongeter was a chief of the Oyster Bay nation, and accepted maps produced by respected Aboriginal scholars depict that nation as spreading across the southern midlands and central highlands of Tasmania and up the East Coast. Major events in his documented life occurred in the Derwent Valley, especially around Ouse, in Hobart and, at the end of his life, on Flinders Island. If he is to be commemorated, a reasonable argument can be made that the most pivotal activities in his life took place outside – not within – the boundaries of the proposed new south-eastern seat.

Without at all suggesting Tongerlongeter should not be memorialized, this hasty affixion is not the way that should be done.

I would urge the AEC to reconsider the proposal and preserve the name of the division of Franklin. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

I make this submission purely in a private and personal capacity.

Yours faithfully,

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