



Submission FOB162

Tasmanian Government

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Environment and Climate Change

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Mr Jeff Pope APM
Australian Electoral Commissioner

By email: fedredistribution-tas@aec.gov.au

Dear Commissioner

I write on behalf of the Tasmanian Government to raise concerns about the proposal to change the name of the Tasmanian electorate of Franklin.

The Tasmanian Government holds significant concerns about the process by which the Australian Electoral Commission has arrived at this proposal and the lack of consultation afforded to the Tasmanian public on this announcement.

I note that the *Guidelines for Naming Federal Electoral Divisions* state that the names of electorates should not be changed or transferred to new areas except for very strong reasons. This was also noted in the initial proposal published by the Redistribution Committee, along with the advice that "at this stage, the Committee proposes retaining the name Franklin, but encourages the public to provide further name ideas and feedback for consideration by the augmented Electoral Commission." In our view, it is not acceptable to announce a new name for an electorate which has remained the same since 1903 and afford less than one week for the public to provide feedback.

As acknowledged in the Redistribution Committee's proposal, the name Franklin has been in continuous use for more than 120 years. It commemorates Sir John Franklin KCH RN, a British naval officer, Arctic explorer and colonial administrator who served as Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land from 1837 to 1843. The Franklin name has become an enduring part of Tasmania's history and identity and is recognised throughout Tasmania, Australia and internationally. Our view is that it should not be lightly changed without a significantly enhanced consultation process and a compelling and widely supported alternative.

The proposal to rename the electorate as Tongerlongeter appears to have arisen late in the redistribution process and was not informed by community views expressed during consultation on the initial proposal. The suggestion was not advanced through broad public consultation or identified as a priority by the Tasmanian community. Given the Electoral Commission's longstanding emphasis on stability and continuity in electorate names, introducing a significant name change at this late stage, in the absence of a demonstrated need or clear community support, appears unnecessary and inconsistent with the principles underpinning the redistribution process. I note these concerns are

shared by Tasmanian community groups, including local Aboriginal groups who object to the proposed use of his name on an electorate.

Since Federation, Tasmania's electoral boundaries have been adjusted on numerous occasions to reflect population growth and changing communities of interest. These boundary changes are an important and appropriate feature of the redistribution process and of a thriving democracy.

By contrast, changes to electorate names should occur only in exceptional circumstances. Tasmania has already experienced considerable change in the names of its federal electorates over time, resulting in a diminishing connection with the original divisions as established in 1903. Today, only the electorates of Bass and Franklin retain their original names. Changing the name Franklin is therefore an extremely significant decision and one which requires much deeper consideration, consultation and justification.

I welcome your further consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely



Hon Guy Barnett MP

Acting Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Minister for Environment and Climate Change