



Submission FOB163

Dr Ian McFarlane

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the proposed name change for the seat of Franklin. I'll begin by pointing out that using the term "historians" broadly gives the proposal an undeserved sense of legitimacy, as if there's a unanimous agreement amongst historians about the name change. Nothing could be further from the truth. Historians, by nature, aren't political activists and don't usually spend their time trawling through, and using selected events from the past to promote and justify contemporary agendas. From the time of Von Ranke, historians have been advised not to make the mistake of judging the past by contemporary standards. As it is neither fair, honest or useful. In Tasmania, only a very small but noisy minority do so. I, for one, am a historian who does not fit your profile. I've specialised in Tasmanian Aboriginal history for the past twenty years, lectured at UTAS and published numerous articles, chapters, and two books, with a third just completed, devoted to the subject. I am personally totally opposed to choosing Tongerlongeter as a candidate and also question some of the fanciful claims made about him. There's no time or space here for a reasonable analysis of the statements put forward regarding the "qualities" of Tongerlongeter, especially since no sources or evidence are provided. It's safe to say that a man whose main activities involved attacking isolated settlers and killing them, without sparing wives or children, is far from being a role model worth emulating. Today, (as we are now using contemporary standards) such acts would be considered war crimes. Elevating him to the status of some sort of significant 'warrior' in our history equating his exploits with the sacrifices of Tasmanian service men and women is a false equivalence and an insult to their legacy. His experiences cannot be compared with those of our soldiers who fought at Gallipoli, faced machine guns and poison gas for years in trenches on the Western Front, or endured the fate of members of the Tasmanian 2/40th Battalion in WWII.

Tasmanian Aborigines were a tribal people who enjoyed unique and diverse cultural traditions, speaking five different languages. There was no common identity or community for Tongerlongeter to lead or to defend as implied, as a consequence he had little impact other than in his own tribal territories. I also fail to see the significance or uniqueness attached to his meeting with Arthur, what did he achieve? As early as 1829, Eumarrah, the chief of the Tyereer.note.panner tribe also held serious talks with the Lieutenant-Governor which were only slightly more productive. In relation to the idea that he played a role as a representative for the community on Flinders Island, it's worth noting there was no such community. In fact, he wouldn't have been able to communicate with people from the North West or West Coast, as they spoke completely different languages. Henry Nickolls when superintendent of Wybalenna noted:

The greatest drawback to a perfect civilisation of the natives is the determined hostilities of the Ben Lomond and Big River tribes to each other. The Western natives have attached themselves either to one or other of the two tribes as their inclination led them thus virtually making the whole body for the purpose of war to consist of only two tribes...

Robinson, at a later date dealt with these tribal divisions by organising separate housing for the western tribes as well as adopting a strategy of sending the different tribal groupings off hunting by themselves for extended periods in order to ease growing tensions in the settlement.

To conclude, I see no sound reason to abandon the name of Franklin, the malicious and vindictive gossip defaming the man, recently presented in the *Hobart Mercury* has thus far failed to convince. I also hold some concerns that the language and level of hostility currently being

directed at Sir John Franklin might signal a movement to remove his statue and name from Hobart, similar to the recent campaign conducted against Dr. Crowther.

Jessie Spink Rooke certainly has some merit as her contribution is of lasting significance and was inclusive, benefiting all the women of Tasmania including Aboriginal women, it also complements Braddon in the North West who had earlier introduced the vote for men, which also including Aborigines. In closing I would appreciate it if you would identify the historians supporting this name change, who have obviously been consulted and not infer that **all the others hold the same opinion.**

Dr Ian McFarlane

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