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Submission FOB169

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Harrison, Richard - Redistribution TAS - Submission on the proposed Tasmanian redistribution (feedback)

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Submission on the proposed Tasmanian redistribution details

Category: Names
Details: Changing the name of the Tasmanian electorate of
Franklin

The British Australian Community Rejects AEC Electorate Renaming: Franklin to ‘Tongerlongeter’

The British Australian Community (BAC) wishes to formally lodge their objection to the renaming of the Franklin electorate in Tasmania. The BAC’s stated aim is to celebrate and defend the history and collective interests of founding Australians. We are the only multicultural organisation for Australians whose ancestors came from the British Isles—Anglo-Celtic Australians. We consider the removal of this electorate name to be an unnecessary and hostile erasure of the legacy of Australia’s Anglo-Celtic foundations.

While many Aboriginal names for natural landmarks and features were acknowledged and respected by settlers, it is now exclusively Anglo-Celtic and European names that are being targeted for removal. These changes sever our connection to country and the past and disrespect the legacy of the largely Anglo-Celtic pioneers who built this nation—establishing towns, cities, administrative regions, ports, parks, and roads that have stood for generations.

The Electorate of Franklin simply did not exist prior to the arrival of the British.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY WAS ENTIRELY UNKNOWN TO THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE FOR THE THOUSANDS OF YEARS THAT THEY LIVED ON THIS CONTINENT AND ITS ADJACENT ISLANDS.

The Franklin electorate was named in 1903 after Sir John Franklin, a distinguished British naval officer, explorer and colonial administrator. He served with distinction in the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 before being appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen’s Land—now Tasmania—from 1837 to 1843. Franklin is most widely known for leading the tragic 1845 expedition to discover the Northwest Passage, during which both of his ships, HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, and all 129 crew members were lost. While not an original Federation electorate name, it clearly belongs to that era and the name should be treated with the same respect as original Federation electorates.

The Australian Electoral Commission’s own naming guidelines state that existing electorate names should not be changed ‘without very strong reasons’ and there appears to be no strong justification for renaming one of the only five Federal electorates in Tasmania. Apart from our objection to the disrespect and loss of historical connection from such a name removal we note that many others view this as an unnecessary confusion for the voting public.

If the renaming of the Franklin electorate proved to be an absolute necessity, which we do not believe has been demonstrated, we would also object to the proposed name of 'Tongerlongeter' for two reasons.

Firstly, the AEC website shows that 24 out of the 150 Australian Federal electorates are already named for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander word or person. Therefore, based on your own statistics, there is already more than adequate representation of Aboriginal heritage in our electorate naming. Erasure of yet another Anglo-Celtic name is entirely unjustified.

In addition, reports published in local newspapers at the time detailed two attacks near Lake Tiberias, Tasmania in October 1828 where Anne Geary, Mrs Gough and two children Alicia Gough and John Langford were brutally murdered by Oyster Bay Aboriginals, a group led by Tongerlongeter. While Tongerlongeter may deserve his place in the history of this conflict, naming a Federal electorate for him is disrespectful to the aforementioned victims and the remainder of the 200 other white settlers who are estimated to have also died as a result of the violence between Aboriginals and settlers in Tasmania during the course of this conflict.

It also strikes us as inappropriate to name an electorate after a man who led a violent and even murderous campaign against the people who brought formal representative democracy to this continent for the first time ever.



Authorised by Harry Richardson

President of the British Australian Community
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