



Submission FOB265

Anonymous 58

Australian Electoral Commission Proposed Tasmanian redistribution

This submission is made in response to the invitation to provide written submissions on the proposed electorate change to the name of the Division of Franklin.

The House of Representatives is currently comprised of 150 Members, each representing a single Division [electorate]. The Division of Franklin is one of the 63 Divisions that has retained its name since Federation, 125 years ago. For many years, the view has been widely held that these names chosen at Federation should be retained and not discontinued.

The AEC website in discussing the names of Commonwealth electorates states this view very clearly. It reads:

“Every effort should be made to retain the names of original federation electorates.”

I support that principle. We live in a rapidly changing world in so many facets of life and the constancy and the stability of the electoral arrangements in Australia are a steadying influence on how Australians see the country is governed. The names of electorates play a part in this.

At Federation and throughout the 125 years since then, there have been a number of electorates with a name that has an Aboriginal background. The number of these electorates has increased over the years and, no doubt, will increase further in the future.

If it is thought in some quarters that every State and Territory should have an electorate named after a notable Aboriginal person, I beg to disagree that that of itself is a compelling justification to abandon a name that has been in use for some 122 years. If the determination is made that this new approach is to be adopted in the case of the current Tasmanian redistribution, I suggest that you leave the name of Franklin untouched and, instead, drop the recently adopted name of Clark.

Another factor that is not mentioned in the AEC's list of factors influencing the adoption of new electorate names is whether the names are user friendly.

I do not suggest that this in any way should be a determining factor, but I do suggest that all redistribution commissioners need to take it into account in their work. You would know that in all things said by Members in the House of Representatives they are required to refer to one another by the name of that Members electorate. The names of electorates need to spring to the mind of Members and be expressed by them easily and without any mental effort. I am unaware of it having been a problem to date, but it could be. To my knowledge

Members have had no difficulty in remembering and articulating the names of the electorates with a name of Aboriginal origin such as Corangamite, Jagajaga, Lingiari, Parramatta, and Werriwa.

I do not know how the proposed new name of Tongerlongter was pronounced when he was alive. It may trip of the tongue like those I have mentioned or be anglicised in a similar way in which Australians pronounce the name of the explorer Kosciusko; but it is a factor that redistribution commissioners now and in the future need to bear in mind in their deliberations.