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Sales, Finley - Redistribution TAS - Submission on the proposed Tasmanian redistribution (feedback)

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Submission on the proposed Tasmanian redistribution details

Category: Names
Details: Opposition to the renaming of Franklin, comments on indigenous consultation.

Further feedback on the augmented Electoral Commission's proposed redistribution for Tasmania

Finley Sales

To start, it's good to see the redistribution be handed down.

I have serious concerns with the proposed renaming (or more accurately, abolition and replacement) of Franklin. While the name proposal is theoretically reasonable under different circumstances, in the case of Franklin I do not think it can be allowed to come to pass.

As you would know, Tasmania and South Australia used an undivided system to elect their members of the House of Representatives at the first 1901 federal election due to not having yet legislated for the single-member structure that the rest of the country used. These were swiftly done away with in a redistribution ahead of the fledgling federation's second election in 1903. This means that *officially*, neither Tasmania nor South Australia have "federation divisions" which AEC guidelines recommend against abolishing. Franklin, alongside Bass, was one of the seats created during that redistribution which means it functionally fills the same niche as a federation division would, as the first single-member divisions ever contested in the state. For this reason I strongly oppose its renaming/abolition.

We have lost numerous original divisions at both the federal and state level and to allow it to happen again would be a tragedy. I think of the NSW electoral district of Murrumbidgee which was abolished because the guidelines for redistribution did not consider its protection as one of two original districts still in existence at the time. It would be a great tragedy to lose another ancient electorate due to a regulatory oversight that fails to consider it for protection. The name Franklin must be retained despite the division's radical geographic transformation.

Additionally, I have heard that there was little to no consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on the potential naming of a division after an Aboriginal Tasmanian. This is deeply problematic, especially given the exceptional history of the Aboriginal people of Tasmania. For this reason, I would suggest that if Franklin is to be renamed, though it shouldn't, it must be given further consultation and that consultation must include explicit and targeted consultation with Tasmania's Aboriginal peoples.