



THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
QUEENSLAND

Submission S48

Neal Macrossan



SUGGESTION TO NAME FEDERAL ELECTORATE ‘MACROSSAN’

‘... I cannot for the life of me understand why those who were associated with the selection of names for the new electorates did not name an electorate after John Murtagh Macrossan. It is beyond my comprehension, from whatever aspect the matter is approached. He is the only one of the founders of federation whose name has not been so honoured.’

Arthur Fadden
One-time Prime Minister of Australia

(Source: House of Representatives, Official Hansard 9 December 1948, page 104)

The below photograph shows colonial delegates to the Australasian Federation Conference held in Melbourne in 1890, including the two Queensland delegates, **John Murtagh Macrossan** (front row seated, third from left) and Sir Samuel Walter Griffith (back row standing, third from left).



Back row standing, left to right: A Inglis Clark (Tasmania); Captain Russell (New Zealand); Sir Samuel Griffith (Queensland); Sir Henry Parkes (New South Wales); T Playford (South Australia); Alfred Deakin (Victoria); DS Bird (Tasmania); GH Jenkins (conference secretary).

Front row seated, left to right: W McMillan (New South Wales); John Hall (New Zealand); **JM Macrossan (Queensland)**; Duncan Gillies (Victoria); John Cockburn (South Australia); James Lee Steere (Western Australia).

John Murtagh Macrossan in one sentence:

John Murtagh Macrossan was a late nineteenth century Qld politician and Australian Statesman who was instrumental in the making of the Australian Constitution and in the founding of the Australian Nation.

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A. SUGGESTION TO NAME A FEDERAL ELECTORATE 'MACROSSAN'

I suggest that, as part of the Queensland redistribution, a New Federal Electorate be named 'Macrossan' (or if the name of an existing electorate is to be changed, it be named 'Macrossan').

My suggestion to name a federal electorate 'Macrossan' is principally made on the basis that John Murtagh Macrossan was an Australian Founding Father who played a crucial role in the Federation of Australia. This would follow the pattern whereby Parkes, Deacon, Inglis Clark and Griffith had federal electorates named after them principally on the basis of their roles in federation.

My suggestion is additionally made on the bases of John Murtagh Macrossan's immense services to Queensland and Australia, his profound sense of public duty, his role as an Australian Statesman, his character and integrity, and his legacy and his uniqueness.

B. APPROACH

In making this submission I have relied almost entirely on firsthand quotes about John Murtagh Macrossan from contemporaries who actually knew and worked with him, who were familiar with his character, and who were, through their positions, highly knowledgeable about the matters under discussion.

All such quotes are from highly respected and eminent people, such as Premiers, Prime Ministers, Founding Fathers, Chief Justices and MLAs (and to reiterate, with a high degree of knowledge about the matters under discussion).

Further, all such quotes are fully and meticulously referenced and are completely verifiable.

Moreover, I have focused on quotes that clearly speak for themselves in support of the point being made. And as such, I have rarely commented on them.

I submit that such fully referenced, self-explanatory, firsthand quotes, from eminent persons who knew and worked with John Murtagh Macrossan, and who, through their positions, were highly knowledgeable about the matters under discussion, **represent the highest, most reliable and weightiest evidence one could rely upon.**

C. LONG OVERDUE

Naming a federal electorate 'Macrossan' is long overdue. As **one-time Prime Minister of Australia, ARTHUR FADDEN**¹, said in Parliament in 1948²:

*'... I cannot for the life of me understand why those who were associated with the selection of names for the new electorates did not name an electorate after John Murtagh Macrossan. It is beyond my comprehension, from whatever aspect the matter is approached. He is the only one of the founders of federation whose name has not been so honoured*³.'

In the same debate MR FADDEN continues –

'... he [John Murtagh Macrossan] was one of the representatives of Queensland at the session of the Federal Council of Australasia, which was held in Hobart in January-February, 1889. He was one of the delegates to the Federal Convention in Sydney, and died in that city on the 30th March, 1891, as a result of pneumonia contracted at that convention. I am surprised that this Government has overlooked perpetuating his name.'

*'... I go further and say that not only was he [John Murtagh Macrossan] one of the founders of federation, who died as a result of an illness which overtook him at the convention held in Sydney in connexion with federation, but he was also the father of two sons who have graced the legal profession in Australia. His eldest son, John Hugh Macrossan⁴ was Chief Justice of Queensland, whilst his youngest son, Neal Macrossan, is to-day the Chief Justice of that State.'*⁵

Mr. EIORDAN.—And a Rhodes Scholar.

Mr. FADDEN.—That is so. Another son, Vincent Macrossan, was the mayor of Mackay when I was town clerk of that city. He served that administration with great distinction. To-day he is a practising lawyer in Queensland, and is looked upon as one of the most eminent solicitors in that State. **I repeat, that I am surprised and disgusted that a man of the calibre, the record, and the achievements of John Murtagh Macrossan should not have been honoured by a Queensland electorate being named after him.** In order to give the Government an opportunity to do honour to such a distinguished man, I shall, before resuming my seat, move an amendment. **I emphasize, with the greatest**

¹ Arthur Fadden was also, amongst other things, leader of the Country Party.

² House of Representatives, Official Hansard 9 December 1948, page 104

³ Mr Fadden goes on to clarify, in the same debate, that John Murtagh Macrossan was the only man who took 'a prominent part' in connexion with federation who has not been honoured by a federal electorate being named after him. In any event, John Murtagh Macrossan is certainly the only one of the 'Big Five' Founding Fathers not having had an electorate named after him, the other four being Andrew Inglis Clark, Samuel Walter Griffith, Henry Parkes and Alfred Deakin.

⁴ Actually, Hugh Denis Macrossan.

⁵ In addition, John Murtagh Macrossan's grandson and namesake, John Murtagh Macrossan, was also Chief Justice of Queensland, and his great grandson, Hugh Fraser KC, was Acting Chief Justice of Queensland for a short time (1.7.15 – 24.7.15).

sincerity and emotion, that John Murtagh Macrossan is the only man who took a prominent part in connexion with federation in this country who has not been honoured by a federal electorate being named after him. I move—

That the name "Leichhardt" be left out, with a view to insert in lieu thereof the name "Macrossan".'

D. CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE CREATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION

Per SIR HENRY PARKES, five time Premier of NSW and said to be the 'Father of Federation', speaking at the 1890 Australasian Federation Conference:

*'... after listening to the really practical speech delivered last night by Mr. Macrossan. That honorable gentleman grasped the true points of this delicate, difficult, and urgent question, with **a knowledge, a tact, and a forcible application of that knowledge, and the principles of Government, which I only wish I could equal.**'*⁶

*'I may pass away, the youngest of its advocates may pass away, as the gifted man, Mr. Macrossan passed away in the midst of his work, but **the principles of his cause are inherent in the destiny of this country.**'*⁷

Per BERNARD WISE, in his work, *'The making of the Australian Commonwealth, 1889-1900: a stage in the growth of the Empire'* -

*"Mr. J. M. Macrossan, of Queensland, ... was ...the second figure in the federal movement next after Sir Henry Parkes. It is questionable, indeed, whether he did not overshadow Sir Henry Parkes at the Convention of 1891. Mr. Deakin once said of him, in conversation with the writer, that **'on the floor of the House he was almost Sir Henry's equal, while, in Committee, he was the superior.'** For he joined to Sir Henry's enthusiasm and breadth of view a quick perception of detail, which the latter lacked, and a power of presenting details in an attractive form."*⁸

⁶ 1890 Australasian Federation Conference - Proceedings No. 6 – Thursday, 13th February page 81, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1890-1009/upload_binary/1890_1009.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890%20Australasian%20Federation%20Conference,%22. Page 7 of downloaded version.

⁷ Sir Henry Parkes before his Constituents, Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842-1954), Friday 17 April 1891, page 5 <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28270294>.

⁸ B.R. Wise *The making of the Australian Commonwealth, 1889-1900: a stage in the growth of the Empire*, Longman Green and Co 39 Paternoster Row London. 1913 page 83, [The making of the Australian Commonwealth, 1889-1900 : a stage in the growth of the Empire](#) page 99 in downloaded document.

Per ALFRED DEAKIN, one-time Prime Minister of Australia:

*'[John Murtagh Macrossan] was one of the clearest heads at the conference, **one of the most ardent and far-seeing of federalists** whose speech, packed with matter for thought, though one of the last delivered, stood out in most respects above them all, its closing words being delivered with a sincerity of passion that conquered his hearers as it evidently conquered him. **His untimely death during the sittings of the Convention of 1891 was a great loss not only to his colony but to the Australasian cause.**'*⁹

Also per DEAKIN:

*'John Macrossan ... had, as was his custom, made a thorough study of the subject and knew its course through the rocks and shoals'*¹⁰

Per EDMUND BARTON, Australia's first Prime Minister:

*'... **Mr. Macrossan's** is another honoured name. Honorable members will remember him as **one of the wisest and ablest members of the Federal Convention of 1891**, and also as having been present at the Melbourne conference in 1890. Unfortunately for Australia, he died during the sittings of the Sydney convention.'*¹¹

Per SIR SAMUEL WALTER GRIFFITH, two-time Queensland Premier, Queensland Chief Justice and Australia's first Chief Justice:

*'On the subject on which are are now met - the federation of Australia - I believe no man in Australia had a wider knowledge or a clearer sense of the work to be done.'*¹²

Per Mr. MOREHEAD, Qld M.L.A., one-time Premier of Queensland:

*'... the intellectual strength of Mr. Macrossan, and his great knowledge of federation matters, ... **greater than that of any man at the convention** ...'*¹³

⁹ "The Federal Story: The Inner History of the Federal Cause 1880-1900" by Deakin, Alfred, 1856-1919 edited by La Nauze, J. A. (John Andrew), 1911-1990 p46, University of Sydney Library, Sydney.
<https://digital.library.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/11460#idx303851> page 44 in online version.

¹⁰ CLEARY, P.S. Australia's debt to Irish nation - builders 1933, Angus & Robertson Limited page 168.

¹¹ Speech on Wednesday, 2 October 1901 in the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates page 5496
<https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=customrank;page=18;query=Macrossan;rec=9;resCount=Default>

¹² 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891 p520,
https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

¹³ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1587,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

*'I well remember the Chief Secretary [Sir Samuel Walter Griffith, Australia's First Chief Justice] saying to me some time ago, that **without Mr. Macrossan a convention dealing with the federation of the colonies would be almost useless, because he was almost saturated with knowledge as regarded the federation of the United States.***¹⁴

*'...he became one of the most honoured representatives at that [National Australasian] Convention.'*¹⁵

Andrew Inglis Clark, Tasmanian Attorney General, and Justice of the Supreme Court of Australia, commenting on Macrossan's deathbed request for the inclusion of the constitutional clause on the formation of new states, indicated **his extremely high regard for Macrossan's constitutional credentials, when he said:**

*'If Macrossan asks for it, it must go in!'*¹⁶

Sir HENRY PARKES again:

*'The late lamented J. M. McCrossan [sic], delegate from Queensland to both the Conference and the Convention, uttered some pregnant words in a remarkable speech at the Conference. Mr. McCrossan was an earnest democrat, whose democracy was not of the frothy order, but had a scientific basis and a symmetry in the adaptation of ideas to fact.' ... 'I quote these passages from Mr. McCrossan's speech on account of their originality in contrast to the platitudes indulged in by others; and his consideration of what he conceived to be the desirable scope of the discussion and the conditions of success in the accomplishment of the great object was not less remarkable.'*¹⁷

Per Mr. DONALDSON Qld M.L.A.:

*'At the present time, when the great question of federation is occupying such a prominent position throughout the Parliaments of Australia, there is no man we could spare less.'*¹⁸

Per Chief Justice, John Murtagh Macrossan (Macrossan's grandson and namesake) -

¹⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1587,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

¹⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

¹⁶ *Brisbane Courier* (Qld, 1864-1933), Tuesday 8 August 1899, p. 8 via Trove
<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/3699144>

¹⁷ Sir Henry Parkes, *Fifty Years in The Making of Australian History with Portraits*, Longmans, Green, And Co., London And New York: 16 East 16th Street, 1892 pp. 605-609 <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3578896/view?partId=nla.obj-4100078>.

¹⁸ Qld Hansard Tuesday 30 June 1891, page 2,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_06_30_A.PDF

*'At the 1890 Conference, amongst the delegates there were some who wavered and were merely half-hearted supporters or relatively timid souls having difficulty in seeing that the time was truly ripe. A reading of the transcript of the proceedings reveals that John Macrossan played a vital role in pulling the direction of the Conference together and securing unanimous support for the central resolution. Parkes, in records he has left behind, acknowledges this.'*¹⁹

E. ENDURING EFFECT ON OUR CURRENT SENATE

The Senate established under the Constitution, and the Senate we have today, resulted from a strong and persuasive 'pushback' by John Murtagh Macrossan as encapsulated in the following extract of his speech at the 1891 Australasian Federation Conference:

'The influence of party will remain much the same as it is now, and instead of members of the senate voting, as has been suggested, as states, they will vote as members of parties to which they will belong. I think, therefore, that the idea of the larger states being overpowered by the voting of the states might very well be abandoned; the system has not been found to have that effect in other federal constitutions. Parties have always existed, and will continue to exist where free men give free expression to their opinions.'^{20,21}

F. SERVICES TO QUEENSLAND AND AUSTRALIA

In addition to his services to Queensland and Australia as outlined in the Constitution Section, here following are some statements in this regard.

Per SIR WILLIAM MCMILLAN NSW M.L.A. and Colonial Treasurer, and fellow Founding Father:

¹⁹ Speech given by retired Chief Justice John Murtagh Macrossan in 2001 on the occasion of the blessing of the Macrossan Room at Nudgee College by Archbishop John Bathersby.

²⁰ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 17 March 1891 p434 pp22-23 of downloaded version <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Dataset%3Aconstitu,conventions,austact,statutewest%20Decade%3A%221890s%22%20Year%3A%221891%22;rec=10;resCount=Default>

²¹ Deakin noted: 'The gallant fiery Macrossan ... in his second speech laying stress upon the influence of party government overlooked or under-estimated by all who had preceded him', *The Federal Story: The Inner History of the Federal Cause 1880-1900* by Deakin, Alfred, 1856-1919 edited by La Nauze, J. A. (John Andrew), 1911-1990, University of Sydney Library, Sydney. p. 41 in online version: <https://digital.library.sydney.edu.au/nodes/view/11460#idx303851>

*'... he came here [to the federation convention in Sydney] to **give the last few hours of his life to the service of his adopted country.***²²

Resolution passed by the 1891 Federation Conference -

*'That the members of this Convention desire to record the expression of their deep regret at the death of the Hon. John Murtagh Macrossan, one of the delegates from Queensland, and their mournful sense of **the great loss which the Convention, and the whole of Australia, has sustained by the sad event.***²³

Per Mr. PHILP, later Sir Robert Philp, one-time Premier of Queensland:

*'He was a gentleman who spent the last twenty years of his life in service of the country.... **His whole mind was concentrated on the public affairs of this colony.** ... When the late Mr Macrossan came to this House he was fairly well to do, and had interests in Charters Towers which brought him in almost an independence, but when he died he was almost penniless ... that was because , on his entry into politics he abandoned his interest in private commerce and speculation, and **gave his whole mind and thought to the interests of this colony.***²⁴

Per the Brisbane Courier, on John Murtagh Macrossan's death:

*'Queensland today will mourn the extinction of the light which has shone on more than one occasion as **the guiding star of the nation's destiny ... [John Murtagh Macrossan] was ... an Australian to the backbone. His whole soul was devoted to the advancement of Australia in a national sense.***²⁵

Per SIR SAMUEL WALTER GRIFFITH, two-time Queensland Premier, Queensland Chief Justice and Australia's first Chief Justice:

*'As a representative of Queensland, **I desire to express**, on behalf of that colony, **my sense of the deep loss which it, as well as Australia, has sustained by the death of Mr. Macrossan** ... there was no man in the colony of Queensland for whom I entertained a higher regard as ... **a true servant of his country** ... he was **one of those men on whom you could always count when the higher interests of the country were at stake.** ... **On the subject on which we are now met - the federation of Australia - I believe no man in Australia had a wider knowledge or a clearer sense of the work to be done. He had***

²² 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891, page 520
https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

²³ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891, pages 520 and 521

²⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1586,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

²⁵ Brisbane Courier (Qld, 1864 – 1933), Tuesday 31 March 1891, page 4,
<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/3524206>

*studied the subject profoundly, and sincerely believed in the cause of federation ...
The death of such men is a national loss...*²⁶

*'I regard his death as a loss not only to this House, but to the colony of Queensland and to the whole of the Australian Dominions of Her Majesty.'*²⁷

Per Mr. MOREHEAD, one-time Premier of Queensland:

*'He was a man who **never spared himself as far as his service of the State was concerned**. He wasted his life in the service of the State, and for himself he thought not. Perhaps the word "wasted" is wrong; but at any rate **his life was utilised in the service of the State** ...'*²⁸

Per Mr. ALAND, Qld M.L.A.:

*'I think we all feel quite as deeply as does that hon. Gentleman does **the immense services which the late Mr. Macrossan rendered to this House and to the country**. I am sure that there is no one in this house, and who has had the pleasure, and I may almost say the privilege, of sitting in this House with the late Mr. Macrossan who was not deeply impressed with the **immense service** which he was to this house ...'*²⁹

Per THE SECRETARY FOR MINES, Hon. W. O. HODGKINSON:

*'... though a political opponent of his, I never failed to recognise his ability, integrity, and **entire devotion to the interests of the colony** to which he had given his great and vast abilities.'*³⁰

Per Mr. SMYTH, Qld M.L.A.:

*'... The way in which he worked for separation, and as Minister for Mines, stamps him as a man whose memory will always be revered in this House.'*³¹

Per Mr. STEVENS, Qld M.L.A.:

²⁶ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891 p520,
https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

²⁷ Qld Hansard Tuesday 30 June 1891, page 2,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_06_30_A.PDF

²⁸ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1587,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

²⁹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1588,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³⁰ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³¹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

*'The late Mr. Macrossan spent **many years in the service of this country** as a politician, **and did work which has never been excelled**, and has only been equalled by one or two other members of this House. He devoted himself entirely to the interests of the colony, and I am sure that his death is deeply regretted from one end of the country to the other.'*³²

Per Mr. HAMILTON, Qld M.L.A.:

*'For nearly twenty years he devoted his valuable services to the country in this House to the detriment of his own prospects, **but to the advantage of the people of the country. The country owes him a debt ...***³³

Per MR PERKINS, Qld M.L.A.:

*'As a minister he **gave up his whole time to the service of the State**, and even when he was not a Minister he did the same.'*³⁴

Per THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS, MR COWLEY:

*'... the late Hon. John Murtagh Macrossan **spent the whole of his valuable time in the service of the country ...***³⁵

Per Mr. DRAKE, Qld M.L.A.:

*'I always had the highest admiration for the late Mr. Macrossan, and I think **the services he performed for the State are worthy of the highest recognition**. The last service that hon. gentleman performed was when he, with other hon. gentlemen, represented this colony at the Federal Convention; and on account of the high character and ability of the public men who represented this colony, Queensland assumed a very high position indeed on that occasion. I think it would be a pity if one of the gentlemen who assisted to raise the colony into that high position, and who actually died when the work was going on, should not have his services recognised by the State in the manner now proposed.'*³⁶

Per Mr. CASEY, Qld M.L.A.:

*'... a man so distinguished by his **services to the country ...***³⁷

³² Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³³ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1591,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³⁶ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1592,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

³⁷ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1704,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

*'Mr. Macrossan **was a man who devoted the best years of his life to the advancement of his country** ...'*³⁸

Per GOUGH WHITLAM, one-time Prime Minister of Australia –

*'... The Convention of 1891 brought together great colonial politicians like Parkes, Dibbs, Grey, Munro, Gillies, McIlwraith, **Macrossan**, Inglisclarke, Cockburn, Downer and Playford, the great future Federal Parliamentarians like Barton, Deakin, Forrest and a giant jurist like Griffith. ... [They] were very great men and **rendered very great service to this nation** ...'*³⁹

G. STATESMAN

Per P.S. CLEARY, in his 1933 work *Australia's debt to Irish nation-builders* -

*'Sir Henry Parkes, who had fifty years' experience of Australian public matters, and Alfred Deakin, the able leader of the native-born, **united in saying that John Macrossan had the most statesmanlike mind in the historic gathering.** [Macrossan] had, as was his custom, made a thorough study of the subject and knew his course through the rocks and shoals.'*⁴⁰

Per ALFRED DEAKIN, one-time Prime Minister of Australia:

*'John Macrossan had **the most statesmanlike mind** in the historic gathering.'*⁴¹

Per MR SMYTH, Qld M.L.A.:

*'The late Mr. Macrossan, **as a statesman, was second to no man in the Australian colonies.** ...'*⁴²

Per Mr. LITTLE, Qld M.L.A.:

³⁸ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1704,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

³⁹ Speech given by E. G. Whitlam, on 3 September 1973 at the 1973 AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

⁴⁰ CLEARY, P.S. *Australia's debt to Irish nation - builders 1933*, Angus & Robertson Limited, Page #

⁴¹ CLEARY, P.S. *Australia's debt to Irish nation - builders 1933*, Angus & Robertson Limited page 168

⁴² Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

*'One of the greatest men in Australia.'*⁴³

*'He had the honour of meeting their departed friend - **Australia's statesman** he called him - in the year 1858. ...'*⁴⁴

Per Mr. ARCHER, Qld M.L.A.:

*'...Mr Macrossan was a **great statesman** and took a great place in the history of Queensland. ... the man with the greatest ability that I have sat with in this House. I am not talking of his ability compared with the trained ability of the Chief Secretary in framing Bills, and in other things, but of **his all round ability as a man of business and a statesman** ; and I say that the people of Queensland may be very glad indeed if once in fifty years there is another man like him in this House.'*⁴⁵

H. INTRODUCED ADVANCED MINER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

John Murtagh Macrossan was ahead of his time in introducing and getting passed advanced miner protection legislation.

Quoting from historian Harrison Bryan:

*'... on 30th August Macrossan was able to bring down a '**Mines Regulation Bill**'*⁴⁶

*'...eventually the new act went on the statute book, representing **a very considerable advance in employee protection**. Not only was the much debated "onus of proof" provision included, but also such radical ideas **as inspection by employee representatives**.*⁴⁷

*'But that, at the subsequent election, he should return in triumph at the head of a solid bloc of members committed to its support, having completely altered the party allegiance of a third of the colony and **that**, then in office under the same Conservative party, **he should carry through measures of advanced Industrial legislation, again by modern standards, almost fantastic.***⁴⁸

⁴³ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁴⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁴⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1592,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁴⁶ *The Political Career of John Murtagh Macrossan* by Harrison Bryan, B.A, M.A Thesis, School of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Classics, The University of Queensland, 1954, University of Queensland Library, page 86

⁴⁷ *The Political Career of John Murtagh Macrossan* by Harrison Bryan, B.A, M.A Thesis, School of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Classics, The University of Queensland, 1954, University of Queensland Library, Page 87

⁴⁸ *The Political Career of John Murtagh Macrossan* by Harrison Bryan, B.A, M.A Thesis, School of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Classics, The University of Queensland, 1954, University of Queensland Library Page 189

I. CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY

Per SIR PATRICK JENNINGS, one-time Premier of New South Wales:

*'I had an acquaintance which ripened into friendship with that hon. gentleman for the last twenty years. I watched his career, and I formed an intimacy with him based upon that acquaintance and **never in the whole course of my experience and dealings with men, have I met a more honorable, truthful, upright, and patriotic man than the late John Murtagh Macrossan.***⁴⁹

Per SIR SAMUEL WALTER GRIFFITH, two-time Queensland Premier, Queensland Chief Justice and Australia's first Chief Justice:

*'... there was no man in the colony of Queensland for whom I entertained a higher regard as an **honorable opponent** and a true servant of his country. he was **one of those men on whom you could always count when the higher interests of the country were at stake.** You always knew where to find him, and that he would be fighting on the right side. Such men are not too numerous, and his loss is much to be deplored. ... I am satisfied that if it had not been for his **high sense of duty**, to which the hon. member, Mr. McMillan, referred, and which impelled him to be present with us at the risk of his life, he might still have been spared to Australia for some time. The death of such men is a national loss, and Mr. Macrossan's death will be so felt in Queensland. I **hope those of us who remain behind may be actuated by the same high sense of duty as always actuated him in his public life.***⁵⁰

*'I am convinced **there was no man in this country who was actuated by a more sincere desire to do his duty.** He always earnestly endeavoured to do his duty.*⁵¹

*'... **when there was higher work to be done than that of mere party politics, in such matters every man, no matter on what side of the House he might sit, could feel that in Mr. Macrossan he had a warm ally.***⁵²

Per Mr DONALDSON Qld M.L.A. –

⁴⁹ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891 p520, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

⁵⁰ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891 p520, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

⁵¹ Qld Hansard Tuesday 30 June 1891, page 1, https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_06_30_A.PDF

⁵² Qld Hansard Tuesday 30 June 1891, page 1, https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_06_30_A.PDF

*'... he was a man not only of great abilities and strong feelings, but **a man of the sternest integrity. His intentions were always good, not only towards Queensland, but towards Australia generally.***⁵³

Per Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN NSW M.L.A. and Colonial Treasurer, and fellow Founding Father:

*'... But he was a man of simple piety-I use the word in the highest sense-with a **high sense of honor and duty** ...'*⁵⁴

Per Mr. PHILP, later Sir Robert Philp, Queensland Premier:

*'He led a pure and spotless life, and as a politician nobody could point the finger of scorn at him'*⁵⁵

Per Mr. MOREHEAD, Qld M.L.A., and one-time Premier of Queensland:

*'... those who had most to do with him must admit that **a man less selfish in spending money on himself or his family never sat within the four walls of this Chamber.***⁵⁶

*'... there was **no bitterness in the heart of John Murtagh Macrossan. A kindlier-hearted man never breathed.***⁵⁷

*'I am sure there is no one who has been a member of this House, and who has had the pleasure, and I may almost say the privilege, of sitting in this House with the late Mr. Macrossan who was not deeply impressed with the immense service which he was to this House, and **everyone will know the kindness which he ever evinced and the***

⁵³ Qld Hansard Tuesday 30 June 1891, page 2,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_06_30_A.PDF

⁵⁴ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891 page 520
https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

⁵⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1586,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁵⁶ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1587,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁵⁷ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1588,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

*disposition which he ever showed of being anxious to afford information to hon. members not so well informed as himself.*⁵⁸

Per The Qld SECRETARY FOR MINES, the Hon. W. O. Hodgkinson:

*'.. though a political opponent of his, I never failed to recognise his ability, **integrity**, and entire devotion to the interests of the colony to which he had given his great and vast abilities.*⁵⁹

Per Mr. GLASSEY, Qld M.L.A.:

*'During my limited experience in the House while he was alive, I always found him a man of great capacity and ability, **a man entirely free from personal motives, and who always treated everyone with respect and in a gentlemanly manner.***⁶⁰

Per Mr. HAMILTON, Qld M.L.A.:

*'.. a more **wholesouled** man never occupied a seat in this House. The gap caused by his death is one that I am sure will never be filled again.*⁶¹

Per Mr. CASEY, Qld M.L.A.:

*'... a man so distinguished by his services to the country, by the purity and **integrity of his life**, and by the brilliant success with which he worked himself forward by his own efforts to become a man of whom the whole of their colonists were proud.*⁶²

*'... he was **a man pure in his motives**, who even in the heat of party politics never was offensive or transgressed the bounds of fair debate - a man of whom even those who were most strenuously opposed to him for years spoke in the highest terms of praise.*⁶³

Per Mr. LITTLE, Qld M.L.A.:

*'One of the greatest men in Australia.'*⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1588,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁵⁹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶⁰ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶¹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶² Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1704,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁶³ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1704,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

Per Mr. ARCHER, Qld M.L.A. –

*'I have formed such a high opinion of [John Murtagh Macrossan] that I cannot speak too highly of him.'*⁶⁵

J. COURAGE

Per The Qld SECRETARY FOR MINES, The Hon. W. O. Hodgkinson:

Raw Courage

*'... though a political opponent ... I have known him from the day when I saw his frail body descending ... a shaft there with that unequalled courage which he possessed, and working as a miner until he raised himself above the immediate calls of penury.'*⁶⁶

Courage of his convictions

*'... although he had that determined character, those strong passions and convictions which animate a man of his worth, I have never yet ceased to admire him, though politically opposed to him.'*⁶⁷

*'... He had hard strong convictions, but no man could be more honest-minded in his convictions than the late Hon. John Macrossan.'*⁶⁸

Per Sir SAMUEL WALTER GRIFFITH:

*'He never was afraid of expressing his convictions, however unpleasant they might be to others. For all that we all esteemed and regarded him.'*⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1592,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶⁶ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁶⁷ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶⁸ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1586,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁶⁹ Qld Hansard Tuesday 30 June 1891, page 1,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_06_30_A.PDF

K. THE HENRY BLAKE AFFAIR - STOOD UP TO THE CROWN, AND DEFEATED ITS ATTEMPT TO APPOINT A CRUEL GOVERNOR

I'll relate this event principally via quoting from a newspaper description of it:⁷⁰

'Picture a gold-miner disagreeing with his monarch on the choice of a new Governor – and winning!

Such were the dizzy heights Macrossan attained.'

'When the Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, died on October 9, 1888, the Imperial Government appointed Sir Henry Blake, a former member of the House of Commons, currently Governor of Newfoundland, to the vacancy.

But Macrossan would have none of him.

He caused a rumpus, claiming the appointee had been guilty of severity of administration in connection with the Land League.

McIlwraith supported Macrossan who was reported as displaying "a strong, overbearing attitude" on the issue.

So strong was it that the Crown gave way, Sir Henry Wylie Norman ultimately being appointed Governor.'

This broke the ice on the practice of the UK Monarch choosing Australian Governors. And this ground-breaking intervention has had **a lasting effect on Australia, right up to the present day** where the practice is now that the Governor is chosen by the relevant State or Federal Government, with the Monarch merely 'rubber stamping' the appointment.

L. NOT BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON IN HIS MOUTH

Per The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. W. O. Hodgkinson):

*'... I saw him ... working as a miner until he **raised himself above the immediate calls of penury.**'⁷¹*

Per Mr. BARLOW, Qld M.L.A.:

*'In almost every possible way that can separate one man from another, I was separated from the late Mr. Macrossan; yet **I can bear testimony to ... the manner in***

⁷⁰ Brisbane *Telegraph* Newspaper, Saturday 26 September 1970, page 5

⁷¹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

*which he raised himself from one of the humblest positions a man can occupy to a position of power and influence in the land.*⁷²

Per Mr. MOREHEAD, one-time Premier of Queensland:

*'... He rose from the position of a common miner ... and he became one of the most honoured representatives at that [Australasian National] Convention. Could any man desire anything greater? Would any working man desire anything greater?'*⁷³

Per MR LISSNER, Qld M.L.A.:

*'... a man who had risen from the ranks of a working miner to one of the highest positions any honourable politician could occupy in the colony.'*⁷⁴

Per MR CASEY, Qld M.L.A.:

*'He was a man who without any adventitious aids worked himself from the position of a working miner to a foremost position in the colonies.'*⁷⁵

M. SUPERIOR MIND

Per SIR WILLIAM MCMILLAN NSW M.L.A. and Colonial Treasurer, and fellow Founding Father:

*'... and there [at the federation conference in Melbourne] all of us who came into contact with him [John Murtagh Macrossan] knew that we had **one of the superior minds of Australia** in our midst. We knew from the words which he uttered that he was a man of great thought and of comprehensive reading and as a debater, for preciseness of utterance, for putting into the smallest possible compass the largest body of ideas, I should say **he probably had no superior in Australasia.***⁷⁶

Per P.S. CLEARY:

*'He [Premier Macilwraith] dominated Queensland for sixteen years, but he did not dominate Macrossan, whose **genius** he fully recognized.'*⁷⁷

⁷² Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1589,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁷³ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁷⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1706,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁷⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1704,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁷⁶ 1891 Australasian Federation Conference Tuesday 31 March 1891 pages 519-520
https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/constitution/conventions/1891-1027/upload_binary/1891_1027.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%221890s%201891%22

⁷⁷ CLEARY, P.S. *Australia's debt to Irish nation - builders*, 1933, Angus & Robertson Limited page 166

Per the Brisbane Telegraph:

*'... in Queensland he won a reputation as **an intellectual giant** and a doughty politician to be reckoned with at the highest level.'*⁷⁸

*'... his energy was boundless, and **his memory phenomenal**.*

*One of his contemporaries, Sir Robert Philp, wrote later that **only once did he ever see Macrossan consult notes to speak, and that occasion was understandable.***'

N. AUSTRALIA WIDE AND INTERNATIONAL ADMIRATION

Per The Brisbane Courier of Tuesday, 31 March 1891:

*'Queensland today will mourn the extinction of the light which has shone on more than one occasion as **the guiding star of the nation's destiny** ... his life was what Mathew Arnold would call beautiful, consistent, single-minded ... as a debater, he was probably unexcelled in Australia ... **he was however, an Australian to the backbone. His whole soul was devoted to the advancement of Australia in a national sense** ...'*⁷⁹

Per Mr. BUCKLAND, Qld M.L.A.:

*'Mr. Macrossan was very much admired and **respected by** all classes of politicians throughout not only Queensland, **but the whole of the Australian colonies.***⁸⁰

Per Mr. STEVENS, Qld M.L.A.:

*'... I am sure that his **death is deeply regretted from one end of the country to the other.***⁸¹

*'The gap caused by his death is one that I am sure will never be filled again.'*⁸²

Per MR LISSNER, M.L.A.:

⁷⁸ Brisbane Telegraph, Saturday 26 September 1970, page 5

⁷⁹ Brisbane Courier (Qld, 1864 - 1933), Tuesday 31 March 1891, page 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3524206>.

⁸⁰ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1707,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁸¹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁸² Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

*'... his **death** was regarded as **a loss** not only to Queensland but **to all Australia**.'*⁸³

And John Murtagh Macrossan's death was not only reported admiringly nationally, but also **internationally**, including in newspapers in The United States⁸⁴, London⁸⁵, Birmingham⁸⁶, Wales⁸⁷ and Ireland⁸⁸.

O. A ONE OFF, HE STANDS ALONE

Per MR MOORHEAD, one time Premier of Queensland:

*'... when we have a case like that of John Murtagh Macrossan before us, we must remember that we are not likely to have it repeated for the next decade or the next one either, or for the next fifty years. He stands as it were alone ...'*⁸⁹

*'I doubt very much whether we will see within the walls of this chamber his like again.'*⁹⁰

*'... we heard his beautiful voice and wonderful oratory and eloquence – **eloquence which I have never heard equalled***⁹¹

*'... one of the greatest men who ever sat within the walls of that Chamber.'*⁹²

Per Mr. ARCHER, Qld M.L.A.:

⁸³ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1706,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

⁸⁴ *The Catholic Standard*, Philadelphia, June 6 1891, page 8 via www.findmypast.com

⁸⁵ *Morning Post*, London, Tuesday 31 March 1891, page 5, British Newspaper Archives, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000174/18480331/019/0005>

⁸⁶ *Birmingham Daily Post*, Tuesday 31 March 1891, page 8. British Newspaper Archives, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000033/18910401/042/0008>,

⁸⁷ *South Wales Daily* 31 March 1891, page 5, British Newspaper Archives, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000919/18910331/030/0005>

⁸⁸ *Dublin Weekly Nation*, Saturday 16 May 1891, page 8, British Newspaper Archives, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001424/18910516/039/0008>

⁸⁹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1588,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁹⁰ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1588,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁹¹ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1588,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁹² Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF

*'... the man with the greatest ability that I have sat with in this House ... **the people of Queensland may be very glad indeed if once in fifty years there is another man like him in this House.**'*⁹³

Per Mr HAMILTON, Qld M.L.A.:

*'The gap caused by his death is one that I am sure will **never be filled again.**'*⁹⁴

Per Mr. LITTLE, Qld M.L.A.:

*'... without fear of contradiction ... **Australia never contained ... a man of greater merit. A better man never breathed in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, or any part of Australia ...**'*⁹⁵

Submission made by Neal Macrossan LL.B. (Hons)

Friday 16 October 2026

⁹³ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1592,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁹⁴ Qld Hansard Friday 16 Oct 1891, page 1590,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_16_A.PDF

⁹⁵ Qld Hansard Friday 23 Oct 1891, page 1705,
https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1891/1891_10_23_A.PDF