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Submission OB333

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McLennan, Scott - Redistribution SA - Submission on the proposed South Australian redistribution

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Submission on the proposed South Australian redistribution details

Category: Names
Details: O'Donoghue Electorate Proposal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the proposal to rename the Grey electorate after Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG. Has consideration been given to naming the electorate 'Lowitja' rather than 'O'Donoghue'? While this might go against general naming conventions, I put forward a few reasons for this suggestion.

- Dr O'Donoghue never had a relationship with her father, Tom O'Donoghue. He handed Dr O'Donoghue and her siblings over to the missionaries and never contacted her again. His death notice didn't acknowledge Dr O'Donoghue and her siblings.
- Although she was known as Lois by the missionaries who raised her, in the late 1960s Dr O'Donoghue discovered during a trip to Coober Pedy her name was 'Lowitja'. Meeting family and hearing her Aboriginal name for the first time was a pivotal moment.
- Dr O'Donoghue did not have a birth certificate until 1998. When she finally formally applied for one, she requested not to have her father's name recorded. She also had her given name registered as Lowitja.
- Just as Dr O'Donoghue made it clear in 1998 that she wanted to be distanced from her father, the AEC should also consider opportunities to do the same in her honour. Although naming the electorate after her is a positive acknowledgement of her incredible achievements, isolating it to her surname is problematic. The name 'O'Donoghue' carries colonial weight, being the surname of Dr O'Donoghue's immigrant uncle and father who both lived a meagre

existence in the South Australian outback, faced charges for 'consorting' with Aboriginal women and left their offspring to be brought up by nuns. In direct contrast, the name 'Lowitja' speaks of taking control of one's destiny, having a profound social impact and refusing to let the burden of history destroy one's ability to enact great change. There are thousands of O'Donoghues in Australia. There will only ever be one Lowitja.
