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Submission OB388

Blackwood Reconciliation Group

Re: Re-naming the electorate of Grey to O'Donoghue - Submission from Blackwood Reconciliation Group

I have uploaded this document in the hope the links in it become more accessible to you as I can see they are not preserved in the online submission system.

Blackwood Reconciliation Group strongly supports the re-naming of the South Australian electorate of Grey to the name "O'Donoghue" in honour of Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue.

Dr O'Donoghue was a prominent Aboriginal rights advocate and played a major role in advancing Indigenous affairs in Australia. She was the inaugural chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and worked tirelessly to advise governments on policies affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Her leadership helped bring national attention to issues like land rights, health, and self-determination. Her lifelong national and international activism is well described here:

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/odonoghue-lowitja-34124>

These achievements were hard won. Dr Lowitja and her siblings were stolen from their mother while living on Yankunytjatjara country when she was two years old, and raised in Quorn, and Eden Hills, SA, in the care of the Uniting Aborigines Mission. The home in which she was raised was named Colebrook Home in both locations. Dr Lowitja grew up in our local community (Blackwood and Eden Hills, SA) between the ages of 11 and 16. In spite of the deeply disabling grief she experienced at the forced and unnecessary separation from her mother and culture, she showed determination, resilience, compassion and care from a young age. As a young teenager she contributed, lovingly, to the care of younger children in the home, then determinedly pushed through barriers to become the first Aboriginal qualified nurse.

Locally, she is remembered for the care and support she provided to the younger children she cared for, the support she provided to them to develop meaningful careers in spite of the racism and discrimination they experienced, and for her commitment to work with local non-Aboriginal Community members to establish the Colebrook Reconciliation Park and Blackwood Reconciliation Group

This short film documents some stories of the Colebrook children and describes some of Dr Lowitja's contributions to the establishment of the Reconciliation Park.

[Colebrook Reconciliation Park: A Place of Healing and Learning](#). The section about Dr Lowitja starts around 16 minutes.

Dr Lowitja was authentic about the deep pain caused to herself, her mother and her siblings by their forced removal. That she remained passionate and active as a change maker her whole life is well documented. The values she lived by are those Blackwood Reconciliation Group strongly supports, and the re-naming of the electorate will add weight to amplifying those values in Australia.