



Suggestion 21

Trish Bergin, Professor Kim Rubenstein, Hon Mary Delahunty GAICD, Dr Nikki Henningham, Professor Jane Lydon, Clare Thompson and Professor Clare Wright OAM

3 pages

23th October 2020

Dear Members of the AEC Redistribution Committee:

Mr Tom Rogers, Ms Michelle Harper, Ms Dione Bilick and Ms Caroline Spencer*

Re: Naming of the proposed new federal electorate in Western Australia following the 2021 redistribution.

We write as public policy contributors, and as regular citizens, enthusiastic about contributing to your deliberations over the naming of the new federal electorate in Western Australia, following the 2021 redistribution. We have read the website material regarding the naming of federal electoral divisions as set out at:

<https://www.aec.gov.au/Electorates/Redistributions/guidelines.htm>

We understand that ‘determining the names of federal electoral divisions is part of the process of conducting a federal redistribution within a state or territory and that the criteria used by redistribution committees to propose the names of electoral divisions, and used by augmented electoral commissions to determine the names of electoral divisions, have previously been the subject of recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.’

We further understand that from these recommendations, a set of guidelines were developed **as a point of reference only** and that the Committee **is not bound** by the guidelines.

Naming after persons

In the main, divisions should be named after deceased Australians who have rendered outstanding service to their country.

When new divisions are created the names of former Prime Ministers should be considered.

Federation Divisional names

Every effort should be made to retain the names of original federation divisions.

Geographical names

Locality or place names should generally be avoided, but in certain areas the use of geographical features may be appropriate (e.g. Perth).

Aboriginal names

Aboriginal names should be used where appropriate and as far as possible existing Aboriginal divisional names should be retained.

We urge this committee to ensure that in light of the fact that only two out of 15 Federal Electoral Divisions in Western Australia (13%) are named after women *alone* that the Committee name this new Division after a woman.

To that end, we also highlight that while the guidelines suggest when new divisions are created that the names of former Prime Ministers should be considered, given there are no deceased women Prime Ministers to choose from, this should *not be the preference* in this redistribution.

We also encourage this new electorate be named after an Aboriginal woman, but in order to enable the Committee to see the rich range of women's names to choose from, our list includes a broad range of women whose rich contributions are worthy of recognition as the name for this new Electorate.

In the first instance, we recommend reviewing this State Library of WA collection <https://slwa.wa.gov.au/wawomen/> which includes a large list of remarkable WA women whose contributions are worthy of recognition.

The following names of deceased women, listed in alphabetical order who we further commend be reviewed are:

Fanny BALBUK (1840-1907)

"Arguably the most important Whadjuk woman of the 19th century" she is revered by her people.

<http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/wetlands/aboriginal-context/fanny-balbuk>

<https://www.nyoongartentembassy.com/fanny-balbuk-yooreel.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_Balbuk

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/initiatives/fanny-balbuk-perth-resistance-fighter/>

Dame Annie Florence Gillies Cardell-Oliver (1876-1965)

Australia's first female cabinet member

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cardell-oliver-dame-annie-florence-gillies-9688>

Florence Hummerston (1889-1983)

First women elected to the Perth City Council

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hummerston-florence-ellen-flo-12667>

Bessie Rischbeith (1874-1967)

A co-founder of the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia in 1909, she was also co-founder and President of the Australian Federation of Women Voters (1921-1942)

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rischbieth-bessie-mabel-8214>

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0142b.htm>

We urge the Committee to short-list an *all women selection* for this new seat. In a system of representative democracy, where women make up more than 50 per cent of the population, we believe we must direct our attention to how we can encourage women to think of themselves as future members of our parliament. A simple way to start is to remind women that their active citizenship and contribution is valued within our community.

Naming electorates after women is one positive way in which this can be done – to create a belief in young men and women, that their contributions to society are of equal value. The system so far has worked in a way to preference men's names. We urge this Committee to preference these worthy women's names given the significance of naming new Federal electorates.

We would be happy to provide further feedback and input to the Committee in its review of this material.

Your sincerely,

Trish Bergin and Professor Kim Rubenstein
Co-Directors, *50/50 by 2030 Foundation*,
Faculty of Business, Government and Law, University of Canberra
[REDACTED]

Hon Mary Delahunty GAICD
CoFounder *Her Place Women's Museum Australia*
[REDACTED]

Dr Nikki Henningham
CEO *Australian Women's Archives Program*
[REDACTED]

Professor Jane Lydon
Wesfarmers Chair of Australian History
The University of Western Australia
[REDACTED]

Clare Thompson
President
Women Lawyers Western Australia (WLWA)
[REDACTED]

Professor Clare Wright OAM
Principal Research Fellow and Professor of History, La Trobe University
[REDACTED]

*We have written each of your names in the salutation in order to highlight the gender make-up of the Redistribution Committee. It may be unusual that this Committee has three women and one man and we would be interested to know if this is a first in the AEC's processes? While we understand that the Legislation identifies certain roles to be members, it means that the Committee is not necessarily always consistent with the Government's commitment to gender parity on Commonwealth Government bodies.

https://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Gender_Balanced_Represent/Report/c01

And the Government's commitment to Gender Balanced Boards

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/leadership/gender-balance-australian-government-boards>