



# Comment on suggestion 3

Dr Deborah Towns OAM

3 pages



Dear AEC, please find below, two suggestions to consider for the new Victorian Federal Seat, Vivian Statham, better known as Vivian Bullwinkle (1915-2000), and Margaret Tucker nee Clements (1904-1996).

**Vivian Bullwinkle** is a significant person to have a Federal Seat named for her. Vivian Statham, née Bullwinkle (1915 - 2000) was an Australian Army nurse during the Second World War. She became famous through surviving a war atrocity and as a prisoner of war. She was the sole surviving nurse of the Bangka Island Massacre, when the Japanese killed 21 of her fellow nurses on Bangka Island, Indonesia, in 1942.

However, she was awarded the MBE and the AO for her service, not only during World War Two but for lifelong service to the Australian community through her leadership in military and civilian nursing and her work in community organisations. She was a nurse for decades and 2020 was declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the International Year of The Nurse. It commemorates 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale. It is important to consider her as firstly there are only four seats in Victoria, named for women. Then, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the care work of all those people in the health industry, who are mainly women, and they have been on the front lines during the Pandemic. Choosing her would provide recognition to all these health care workers and by unfortunate coincidence, she managed infectious disease for two decades, when she headed up the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in Victoria, in the 1950s to 1970s. Recognition of her military service also commemorates 2020, as being 75 years since World War Two ended.

Vivian was born in South Australia and there she trained as a nurse. Then she worked in Hamilton, Victoria and moved to Melbourne's Jessie McPherson. In 1941 she enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service to support the Australian Army during World War Two (1939-1945). After a short time in Singapore and along with others she fled when the Japanese invaded. Their ship was sunk by the Japanese and the survivors landed on a beach, surrendered to the Japanese on Bangka Island but eventually all were killed, except Vivian who survived serious bullet wounds by pretending to be dead. She hid and later surrendered again and spent another three and half difficult years in captivity until the end of the war.

She continued to serve as a military nurse after the war ended in Japan from 1946 to 1947. Resigning as a Captain, she was awarded the Royal Red Cross Medal in 1947. After joining the Citizens Military Forces in 1955 she retired in 1970 as a Lieutenant Colonel. This work and other activities included Director of the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, Trustee of the National War Memorial, Deputy Principal of the Commandant Australia Red Cross Society, President of the College of Nursing Australia, Member of the College of Directors of the Royal Humane Society, and was the first woman Warden of the Australian War Memorial. In 1992 she was made an Honorary Life Member of the Australian Red Cross Society. Upon retiring from Fairfield Hospital, she married Colonel F.W. Statham. Vivian was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal, the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1973 and the Order of Australia(A0) in 1993.



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is the  
Victorian Women's Citizens Movement, the League of Women Voters,  
and Women for Canberra. The first President of LWVV was Mrs Julia  
Rapke JP OBE . The Bessie Mabel Rischbeith Memorial Trust is  
conducted under the auspices of the LWVV as a tribute to a  
remarkable Australian woman.

Vivian died in 2000 and in 2001 she was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, making her one of the first women to be included. The foyer of the Broken Hill Health Service is named in her honour.

Information from:

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0362b.htm>

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**Margaret Elisabeth Tucker (nee Clements), known as “Auntie Marge”** (1904-1996), is one of Australia’s most notable Aboriginal leaders and activists. In 1904, she was born a Yorta Yorta, (Dhulinyagan) woman in New South Wales. Her lifelong service to the Australian community was recognised with the Member of the British Empire (MBE) awarded for her leadership in Aboriginal community organisations. Recognising her for the name of the new Victorian Federal Seat, and her service to Australians is important for many reasons. There are only six Federal Seats named for Aboriginal people across Australia and few named for women in Victoria or across Australia. Choosing Margaret Tucker recognises not only her service but recognises the Stolen Generation as she was taken from her mother aged 13, and the significance of the Aboriginal people to Australia’s history. Aborigines are Australia’s first inhabitants who have been living here for 50,000 years, making them the world’s oldest continuing culture.

She was one of the many Aboriginal children forcibly separated from their parents when she was sent to the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls. Later, the racism and other discriminatory experiences she put up with for 11 years, while working as a domestic led her to take up the cause of the Aboriginal people. She joined her cousins, Jack and George Patten, and other Aboriginal leaders who brought the Aboriginal plight to the notice of white Australians.

After moving to Fitzroy, Victoria, Margaret married Phillip Tucker, worked in local factories and in 1932, became treasurer of one of the country's first Aboriginal organisations, the Victorian Aborigines League. Her leadership led to her being selected, with Pastor Doug Nicholls and William Cooper, to represent the Victorian Aboriginal community during the first Aboriginal Day of Mourning on 26 January 1938. It was organised by the Aboriginal Progressive Association, as a protest coinciding with Australia's 150th anniversary celebrations in Sydney on Australia Day 1938. Her cousin, Jack Pattern, was one of the organisers. In 1939 he joined with others who instigated the **Cummeragunja Mission Work Off**. She organised support for the 200 former residents who had escaped to the Bamah Forest in Victoria.

During the Second World War, she supported Australia’s war effort. Working at a Footscray rope maker and then at a munitions factory she organised concerts to raise money for the Red Cross. Admired for her beautiful singing voice, Margaret entertained servicemen at a military hospital in Heidelberg. She continued to support local families and organised the first Aboriginal Debutante Ball in 1949. It became an important annual fundraiser, and continues to empower young Aboriginal women. By the 1950s, Margaret was a highly respected and influential community leader, who delivered rousing speeches to crowds in Carlton Gardens. She became a valued member of the Aborigines Advancement League, the successor to the Australian Aborigines League she had helped establish. After the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) was established in 1958,

In 1945 three women's organisations agreed to combine: the Victorian Women's Citizens Movement, the League of Women Voters, and Women for Canberra. The first President of LWV was Mrs Julia Rapke JP OBE . The Bessie Mabel Rischbeith Memorial Trust is conducted under the auspices of the LWV as a tribute to a remarkable Australian woman.



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Margaret was a fixture at its annual conferences. She was also invited to America to speak about Aboriginal issues in 1957. Margaret was skilled at working constructively with government. In 1964, she became the first woman to be appointed to the Victorian Aborigines Welfare Board.

In 1968, she was the first Aboriginal woman to join the Commonwealth's Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. She also served on the Aboriginal Land Council of Victoria and the Victorian Government's Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee. Margaret worked alongside her sister Geraldine Briggs to form the Victorian Aboriginal and Islander Women's Council towards the end of the 1960s. It went on to become a national body.

In 1973, Margaret's leadership and support played a vital role in establishing the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. She was also a patron of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, which was established by her daughter, Mollie. Many vulnerable young Aboriginal women have found refuge at the Margaret Tucker Hostel since 1983. Published in 1977, her autobiography, *If everyone cared*, is an important account of the early policies of child removal. Margaret also featured in the acclaimed documentary *Lousy Little Sixpence*, broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

She died in 1996. In 2001, Margaret was inducted to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women, established as a celebration of Australia's Federation. She was among the first to receive the honour.

Notes were based on the following websites:

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/margaret-tucker-mbec>

<http://ia.anu.edu.au/biography/tucker-margaret-elizabeth-auntie-marge-1556>

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NB: The National Council of Women Victoria have supported the LWVV's nominations for Vivian Bullwinkle and Margaret Tucker to be considered by the AEC for their names to be considered for the new Victorian Federal seat.

Thanking you for your consideration, yours sincerely,

Dr Deborah Towns OAM, President.



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