



Suggestion 96

Trish Bergin, Professor Kim Rubenstein, Maria Chetcuti,
Hon Mary Delahunty GAICD, Dr Nikki Henningham, Kerry
Wilson, Tanja Kovac, Ruth McGowan OAM, Nicolette
Snowden and Professor Clare Wright OAM

4 pages

16th October 2020

Dear Members of the AEC Redistribution Committee:

Mr Tom Rogers, Mr Steve Kennedy, Mr Craig Sandy and Mr Andrew Greaves*

Re: Naming of the proposed new federal electorate in Victoria 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 Victoria, 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 5 out of 38 Federal Electoral Divisions in Victoria (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 you review the 27 women featured in <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/women-life-city-2018.pdf> - some of those women are also identified below but we encourage the Committee to consider them *all* and their full biographies, once the specific location of the seat is determined.

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

Dr Zelda D'Aprano

Well known for her contributions to pay equality through her work at the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union (AMIEU)

See entry in <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/women-life-city-2018.pdf> and <https://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0523b.htm>

Eleanor Harding

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/eleanor-harding>

<https://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE6383b.htm>

During the 1960s, Eleanor Harding was involved in a national campaign to secure equal rights for Indigenous Australians, as a member of the Aborigines Advancement League and the Victorian branch of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI). She was part of the latter's push for constitutional change, which resulted in the 1967 Referendum.

Joan Kirner AC

Former Premier of Victoria

See entry in <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/women-life-city-2018.pdf> and <https://herplacemuseum.com/biographies/joan-kirner/> and

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0237b.htm>

Dame Nellie Melba

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/melba-dame-nellie-7551>

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0332b.htm>

Nellie Melba became one of the most famous singers of the late 19th and early 20th century, and was the first Australian to achieve international recognition as a classical musician. She took the pseudonym "Melba" from her home town, Melbourne.

Marion Phillips

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/phillips-marion-8036>

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0563b.htm>

Melbourne born Marion Phillips was the first Australian women to become a member of a Parliament– in the UK.

Mary Rogers

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rogers-mary-catherine-13173> and
<https://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers/biogs/AWE3955b.htm>

Mary Rogers became the first woman councillor in Victoria when she was elected to the Richmond City Council in 1920.

Margaret Tucker MBE

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/margaret-tucker-mbec>
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0093b.htm>

Margaret Tucker, or Aunty Marg, was one of Australia's earliest female Aboriginal activists and a leading figure of the 20th Century.

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 simple positive way in which this can be done – to create a belief by 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]

Maria Chetcuti
Operations Manager
Victorian Women's Trust

[Redacted]

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

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Dr Nikki Henningham
CEO *Australian Women's Archives Program*

Kerry Wilson
Founding member Women in Gippsland and
Co-Founder *Put Her Name On It* campaign

Tanja Kovac
CEO *Gender Equity Victoria*

Ruth McGowan OAM
Co-founder *Honour A Woman*
Co-founder *Put Her Name On It* campaign
Co-founder *More Women For Local Government*
Member *Women in Gippsland*

Nicolette Snowden
Put Her Name on It campaign

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

*We have written each of your names in the salutation in order to highlight the gender make-up of the Redistribution Committee. We understand that the Legislation identifies certain roles, but it is not consistent with the Government's commitment to gender parity on Commonwealth Government bodies.

https://www.aph.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>

We are heartened by this Press release <https://www.financeminister.gov.au/media-release/2020/09/17/appointment-chairperson-australian-electoral-commission> and the appointment of Justice Susan Kenny as the new Chairperson of the Australian Electoral Commission and we will write to her separately.