



# Comment on objections 100

## William Cooper's Legacy Project

3 pages  
(Petition has not been supplied)

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FedRedistribution - VIC](#)  
**Subject:** [VIC REDISTRIBUTION COMMENT ON OBJECTIONS] Uncle Boydie & Abe Schwarz \*WWW\*  
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Friday, 18 May 2018 5:58:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [vic-Uncle Boydie & Abe Schwarz-.docx](#)

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Victorian Redistribution comments on objections uploaded from the AEC website.

Name: Uncle Boydie & Abe Schwarz

Organisation: William Cooper's Legacy project

Address: [REDACTED]

Phone number: [REDACTED]

Additional information: The William Cooper's Legacy project, supported by his grandson Uncle Boydie, ENDORSES changing the

"Gellibrand" electorate to "Cooper", initiated (attached) by Hon Tim Watts MP sitting in this electorate.

William Cooper is acknowledged as leading the only worldwide private protest after Krystallnacht of 1938, from THIS ELECTORATE, Footscray!

Please see [www.williamcooperslegacy.yolasite.com](http://www.williamcooperslegacy.yolasite.com)

# RENAME GELLIBRAND

National symbols matter. They are the way we project our sense of national identity - they show us how we see ourselves and are the prism through which others see us. The symbols we choose tell us something about the kind of country we are.

That's why we should rename the Federal Electorate of Gellibrand as part of the current Victorian redistribution.

Gellibrand is named after Joseph Tice Gellibrand, an early European lawyer and explorer who played a key role in drafting what became known as the 'Batman Treaty' between a group of land speculators and local indigenous elders. The 'treaty' seems to have involved the purported exchange of 600,000 acres of land in what is now Melbourne, for a collection of trade goods. It is unlikely that the elders understood the terms of the exchange. The concept of land possession was completely foreign to the Indigenous people of Victoria and it is now thought that the Wurundjeri may have thought Batman was offering them gifts in exchange for safe passage – a transaction known as tandarrum.

The legacy of the Batman Treaty is contested at best.

Gellibrand was a product of a different time and his interactions with indigenous Australians reflect outdated thinking about our relationship with the traditional owners of our land. Few residents of Melbourne's West today would view him as having made an 'outstanding' contribution to our nation.

There are many Australians with a connection to Melbourne's West who are more deserving of recognition through the naming of a federal electorate. William Cooper is worth considering as an alternative.

You might have seen his story on the wall of the Footscray Train station where the footbridge is currently named after him.

William Cooper was a trailblazing activist for Aboriginal rights in the early 20th century. He helped to establish the Australian Aborigines League to advocate for a fair deal for Indigenous Australians – including land rights, enfranchisement and direct representation in the Parliament. The League's first offices were located in Footscray and Seddon, within the current boundaries of the electorate. Cooper also pioneered the establishment of National Aborigines Day, first celebrated in 1940, and

now celebrated as nationwide as NAIDOC week. He is also famous for leading a protest of the German consulate in Melbourne against Nazi persecution of the Jews during the Kristallnacht – recognised by Yad Vashem as the only protest of its kind to take place anywhere in the world.

His legacy has inspired positive social change for indigenous communities in Melbourne's west and throughout Australia. His achievements had national impacts and embody the values of equality and inclusiveness that our modern community values today.

Renaming Gellibrand as Cooper would not only be a powerful symbol but a form of practical recognition that acknowledges the importance of our indigenous past and future. I want to show the AEC that our community supports this change.

But the bar to justify renaming a Federal electorate is a high one.

**I want to show the Australian Electoral Commission the level of community support for this change – so add your voice to the petition to support this name change here**

1187 Signatures  
Add your name today.