

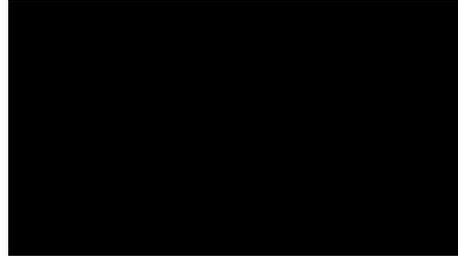


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Comment on public suggestion number 4

Martin Gordon

4 pages



The Committee

Comments on submissions

I had made a submission to this committee and would like to also comment on other submissions.

Renaming Denison

I am aware that there has been a popular feeling in favour of renaming Denison as Clark or Inglis Clark for sometime. I would prefer Clark for the reasons of simplicity. Whilst Kingsford-Smith may exist as a double name, there are few examples of them (certainly in the Australian setting).

The most persuasive submitter in favour of the renaming was unsurprisingly The Hon Michael Kirby. He sets out the considerable impact that Clark had on the life of his state, and also this nation through his contribution to our Constitution, as well as the electoral system (we know as Hare-Clark), which is seen as fair, representative and counter to the excesses of majoritarianism.

A curse which afflicts the current era and which will come to haunt us all in time, is the construct of presentism, where we judge the events, actions, thoughts, and practices of the past through the values, thoughts and practices of our era. Governor Denison is harshly judged by today's values, but in time our values will be harshly judged by those in the future. Context is everything. To illustrate we have only had a formal refugee convention since 1951, and only considered genocide a crime since the end of the Second World War, when an offence was in effect retrospectively created. In my lifetime, I have seen the demise of corporal punishment, and capital punishment (at least in this country, which greatly pleases me as an abolitionist and civil libertarian). Sweden under its eugenics policy only ceased sterilising the mentally handicapped in 1976, yes only 1976. In the current day countries are withdrawing from the International Criminal Court, an extraordinary turn of events.

I would add that several former Governors are honoured with federal electorate names, Hindmarsh and Gipps(land) readily to mind. There have been no serious plans to remove those names, but I suspect that somewhere they may have upset some presentist shibboleth and may be the subject of disestablishment pressure in the future (in an electoral naming sense at least).

All this said, Clark seems an entirely reasonable and honourable man to honour with the naming of a Federal Division. You could do far, far worse.

Entire Local Government areas

2016 is an unusual time in terms of Tasmanian electoral boundaries, in that it is possible to configure electoral boundaries for all 5 Divisions using entire local government areas. This is something I have done. Several other proposals involve splits of local government areas, but other than maintaining Clark (Denison) and Franklin, the splits should be entirely unnecessary. The Labor Party solution with splitting out Railton from Kentish is quite unnecessary.

Braddon

The proposals for Braddon are relatively homogenous, combining La Trobe in its entirety in Braddon; or alternatively using the current division of La Trobe and adding Kentish (the Liberal Party); or combining La Trobe and excising the township of Railton from Kentish (the Labor Party). The Labor Party argument about numbers and excising Railton seemed somewhat weak, whilst the reference to the Cradle Mountain links has attraction, again seemed weak as it would support the inclusion of an entire council rather than one portion of it (Railton).

The inclusion of entire local government areas seems to be more compelling and the numerical effect meets the projected enrolment requirements. Whilst a local government area may wish to be included in one Division of another, sometimes the numbers do not permit. In this case the wish of La Trobe to be combined in one Division namely Braddon is a good alignment of wishes and numbers and geographical logic combining in the one direction.

Accordingly, I would prefer the inclusion of the entirety of La Trobe in Braddon, as I and the other proposals suggest.

Bass

The proposals for Bass are less homogenous. Bass has always included the north-east coast and Flinders Island. Constructs that place Dorset into Lyons will mean a single electorate that spans from the middle of Bass Strait to the most southerly part of the Tasman Peninsula. Lyons is traditionally an awkwardly shaped Division taking in coasts in the north, south, east and west of the state.

The previous expansion of Braddon down the west coast has eliminated the west coast from the equation. If the inclusion of all of La Trobe into Braddon occurs, Lyons will only have coast in the east and south of the state, if, that is, all of West Tamar is included in Bass. The inclusion of West Tamar as an entire local government area is numerically possible and would mean the entirety of the north coast of the state is contained in two Divisions i.e. Braddon and Bass.

West Tamar has expressed a wish to be included in Bass. This is a case of wishes and geography aligning, but not numbers. But the numbers can align if that portion of Meander Valley currently included in Bass is transferred to Lyons. Such are the numbers Bass with West Tamar, Launceston, George Town and Dorset is within quota both now and in 3.5 years.

The current local government boundaries do not include all of Launceston in one council. Launceston is split, some towns close to Launceston are in other councils and in Lyons. Meander Valley comes in very close to the centre of Launceston. The placement of the entire local government area works numerically, and avoids splitting other council areas. Splitting West Tamar and Meander Valley between two Divisions as entire local government areas is more sensible than the awkward split at present.

If there is a concern that the residents of the greater area of Launceston are split into a neighbouring Division, it makes more sense than placing half of another more northerly council (West Tamar) into Lyons and where its MP is located in Brighton, i.e. in the south of Lyons and even further away than western Launceston is from Brighton.

A realignment of Divisions based on whole local government areas is an idea whose time has come. It makes numerical and geographical sense, and all the residents of West Tamar will have ready access to their local MP (in Launceston). All of Meander Valley will be reunited in one Division (Lyons).

Clark – (Denison)

The case of Denison (or Clark as it may become) is an instance of where reform is proposed by a few (Gordon and Waddell) whilst the more conventional approach (un-Clark-like) is to maintain existing boundaries in large part.

Should the committee prefer to maintain broadly the western shore urban Denison (or Clark) the Liberal Party suggestion for use of a continuous road boundary of a highway is quite reasonable and is numerically viable, and should be adopted.

I had canvassed in 2009 the idea of a reducing the awkward split of Franklin. At the current time and in the projections the combination of Hobart, Huon Valley and Kingsborough local government areas comprises a full quota. Divisions, districts, ridings etc. that are split in such a way by another electorate are quite rare. I think they should be avoided where possible but I am not absolutely wedded to it.

I would urge the committee in the direction of the more significant change, and if renaming Denison to Clark is undertaken it would seem a very appropriate time to do it. The new Division of Clark would be on the western shore of the Derwent embracing three entire local government areas, whilst Glenorchy would comprise all of Clarence and Glenorchy, which would be joined by bridge access between the shores.

I suspect in time, renaming Denison to Clark and the proposed western shore Clark; and Clarence and Glenorchy based Franklin will seem entirely unremarkable; just as many of Clark's ideas seem these days. An idea whose time has come.

Franklin

The discussion above about Clark (Denison) gives away my plans and preferences for Franklin. Most other proposals despite the adoption of a new name propose essentially want to maintain the awkward split of Franklin. I have proposed that Franklin comprise only Clarence and Glenorchy, and that Franklin lose Old Beach which is part of the Brighton Council to Lyons. This transfer at least is broadly agreed amongst submissions.

The inclusion of Richmond reflects entire council boundaries but I suspect in time it will need to be transferred to Lyons as well.

Lyons

With my proposals for Braddon and Bass, Lyons is reduced in area, and confined to the eastern and southern coastlines. Under my proposals, it comprise entire local government areas, losing part of West Tamar, but gaining the remainder of Meander Valley (from Bass) and Old Beach from Brighton (from Franklin). Whilst my Lyons proposals are consequential from the changes to Braddon, Bass and Franklin, it is intuitively sounder in terms of reduced area, and geographic logic, i.e. two rather than three coastlines, and less disjointed.

In a future redistribution given the continuation of the current pattern of population growth, the excision of Richmond from Franklin seems probable, and other semi-rural areas from Clarence currently in Franklin could easily be transferred.

Conclusion

The relative similarity of Braddon, Bass and Lyons proposals was striking. Shifting all of La Trobe to Braddon, all of West Tamar to Bass, all of Meander Valley to Lyons, and all of Brighton to Lyons is strikingly simple.

The interchange of Glenorchy for the balance of Huon Valley and Kingsborough is numerically significant in Tasmania, given relative long term population stability in Tasmania. However, if renaming a Division is taken up, such a realignment seems timely and appropriate.

I wish the committee well in their deliberations.

Martin Gordon

7 December 2016