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Bass Coast South Gippsland Reconciliation Group

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Further Comment to the Australian Electoral Commission

from

BASS COAST SOUTH GIPPSLAND RECONCILIATION GROUP

Changing the Name of the McMillan Electorate

1st December 2017

It was gratifying to see that 28 of the 67 Victorian statewide submissions in the 2017 Victorian redistribution process referred exclusively to the need to change the name of the McMillan electorate, with over half of them arguing that, in the interests of justice, it should be the Aboriginal Community's right to choose a name. Several other submissions also argued for a change of name for McMillan, in their discussion of a broader range of electorates.

The Bass Coast South Gippsland Reconciliation Group wholeheartedly supports the joint submission made by the Gunnaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and the Bunurong Land Council to name the electorate **Bunjileene-Purrine**. It is significant that the two Registered Aboriginal Parties that occupy the geographic area of the electorate have worked together to choose a combined name, drawn from their ancestral histories, with specific ties, in relation to Bunjileene, to McMillan's era and the violent deaths for which he was responsible. Bunjileene was captured during the terrible inflictions of the 'killing times' on Aboriginal men, women and children, during the searches for the white woman, believed, probably erroneously, to have been taken by the Gunnaikurnai. He died in captivity. Purrine, a great leader and Bunurong head clansman, died in about 1836, almost before white settlement. His country was Wilson's Promontory.

For those of us who seek reconciliation with Aboriginal Communities, it is a simple yet significant request that the right to name the electorate be granted to those who have suffered from the dispossession and denial of sovereignty that colonial settlement wrought, and that McMillan expressed most brutally.

The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* says '... in 2017 we seek to be heard'. The Aboriginal voice must be heard.

AEC guidelines indicate that Aboriginal names be chosen 'where appropriate' and we cannot imagine a more appropriate situation than to replace McMillan with the Aboriginal Community choice of Bunjileene-Purrine.

We are distressed at the prospect that this process could be postponed for a further seven years if a general election is called. Is it possible that in that case, and if sufficient information has been gathered to form your final decision, a name change could be enacted post haste?

(Dr) Marg Lynn for Bass Coast South Gippsland Reconciliation Group