Objection 86

Alan Thomas

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Renaming of the division of McMillan to "Monash"

The division of McMillan should not be renamed to Monash, because of the confusion with the existing geographical use of the name "Monash" that is bound to arise.

There is no doubt that Sir John Monash was an influential figure in the development of the economy of the Latrobe region. However, when most Victorians think of the name "Monash" in a geographical sense, they think of the area around Clayton in Melbourne's middle south-eastern suburbs, which is home to the main campus of Monash University, the City of Monash local government area, the Monash Medical Centre, and many other features using the name. This association has only grown stronger in the two decades since the renaming of the South Eastern Freeway to the Monash Freeway. On the other hand, I have struggled to identify any features or places named after Sir John Monash in West or South Gippsland.

To apply a name with such strong geographical associations to a different area, not too far away from the place to which the name is normally associated, is a recipe for confusion. Electors who are less engaged with the political process may not understand why, although they live in the Monash area, they are not represented by the member for Monash - or conversely, those living in West and South Gippsland filling out their ballot paper for the "Division of Monash" may become concerned that they are voting for the wrong division.

The name given to the division of Casey, which is north of the City of Casey, is confusing enough. In my view, the association of the name "Monash" to the City of Monash area is even stronger than the association of the name "Casey" to its respective area.

In selecting a new name for a division, the AEC should look for names which do not have such strong geographic links. Certainly, names of Victorian local government areas should be strictly avoided, whether the LGA lies within the division or not.

Alan Thomas
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