



Objection 219

Viki Sinclair

3 pages

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To: [FedRedistribution - VIC](#)
Subject: [VIC REDISTRIBUTION OBJECTIONS] Viki Sinclair *WWW* [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
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Victorian Redistribution objections uploaded from the AEC website.

Name: Viki Sinclair

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

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Additional information: Please find attached my Submission for a name change from Monash to Bunjileene-Purrine, an indigenous name chosen by the people of this area.

**Re: Objection to Proposed Name Change for New Redistribution
of former McMillan Electorate, Gippsland**

Submission by Viki Sinclair, Mirboo North, Gippsland Victoria. 2.5.2018

I wish to commend the AEC for seeking a replacement to the current name of McMillan for the new redistribution electorate in this area of Gippsland where I live at Mirboo North. As was seen in the submissions concerning this matter, the request for this change was overwhelming, largely due to serious concerns about Angus McMillan and his leadership in the near genocide of the Gunnai people in the mid 1800's. As I wrote in my earlier submission, my great great great grandfather Colin McLaren was a member of his Highland Brigade which carried out these massacres and I now well understand the terrible history that is part of Gippsland today. So I personally thank you for recognising the truth of this past and for seeking a new way forward.

However, I do wish to object to the choice of "**Monash**" as the replacement and new name for my electorate.

In light of the above, I cannot understand why you would have chosen the name Monash as the replacement rather than choosing an indigenous name provided by the people of this region. I have no objections to Monash per se, understanding his great contribution to Gippsland and to Australia on many fronts – he was indeed an amazing man who gave and left a great legacy to this country. However his name is so well recognised now and in so many places, it seems a very repetitive, even meaningless choice for our new electorate. To get to Gippsland, we travel along the Monash Freeway, there is Monash Uni and Monash Hospital and now the new Monash memorial museum in France just opened on this year's Anzac Day – these are but a very few. He is memorialised in statues and other places across the country and internationally.

Surely it is now time and appropriate in the circumstances here to recognise the very people who gave so much, who nurtured this country for 30,000 – 40,000 years prior to white settlement. Thanks to our indigenous past people, we have inherited a wonderful part of the world but it was all at their cost. They were great custodians with leaders and key sites of their own. It is time to recognise them and their contribution to all that we now have and enjoy in Gippsland. Even now, their history is largely unknown and rarely acknowledged publicly in this region of Victoria. I find this reprehensible in 2018 when we later arrivals of less than 200 years, claim all the history here as being valid only after white settlement.

I also am concerned that the Gunnaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and the Bunurong Land Council have put forward the name **Bunjileene-Purrine** which has been now rejected by the AEC in favour of Monash. 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. Bunjileene is very relevant to McMillan's era and the violent deaths for which he was responsible in the Gunnai lands. Bunjileene was captured during the terrible inflictions of death on Aboriginal men, women and children, during the searches for the white woman believed, probably erroneously, to have been taken by the Gunnaikurnai. McMillan and his colleagues did not record the life of those they captured or murdered. Purrine, a Bunurong head clansman, almost pre-dates white settlement, dying in about 1836. His country was Wilson's Promontory. Purrine was known as a mighty

warrior but lived before European entry to the land and therefore knowledge was orally and scantily preserved. This does not make it less valid and occurs in many histories around the world.

It is extraordinary that the 3 indigenous groups representing the aboriginal people of the area during this early period - the Gunnai, the Kurnai and the Bunurong - formed a naming committee for the very purpose of choosing an indigenous name for this electorate in 2017. They wanted to ensure the very best decision was made on a truly representative basis for their people. This is a unique event which also shows the gravity of the issue for their people and the importance of this decision. It is the only name I am sure that was developed by a truly representative group of Gippslanders.

Your criteria for choice of name states that they be deceased Australians who have given outstanding service to their country and that aboriginal names should be used where appropriate. I can think of no better case than theirs.

I am sure the name "Bunjileene- Purrine" will raise eyebrows and many here will ask – "Who on earth were they?" When people ask this question, they are on the first step of learning their indigenous history if they care to listen. This is a vital part of our missing education and knowledge here. It does not make this history any less valid or real to us today. And no, I too did not have any idea who these people were until now. But I am starting to learn and understand. I am so pleased and proud to think that the choice of Bunjileene- Purrine was achieved in this way. It is time we stopped using only white filters on all such considerations.

Choosing this indigenous name, nominated by the leaders of the very people concerned, would ensure a name that finally means something here, firmly ties us to our past but will start us off on a different and necessary path for reconciliation and our shared future.

I can only commend this to you – in fact I think you will find great support in Gippsland generally for such a decision, as a recent ABC Gippsland radio call-in session revealed. There were many calls and much discussion about this topic. All except one person supported the new name change and all wanted it to be replaced with an indigenous name that had relevance to the indigenous people. I think the community is ready and this change is way overdue!

I look forward to hearing your final choice of Bunjileene- Purrine.

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