



Objection 253

Marianne Sherry

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Redistribution Secretariat for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 768
Melbourne
VIC

RE: Request to reconsider approving a name change for the electorate of Batman

Dear Committee Members,

I have been a resident of Northcote since 1987, I am a voter in the electorate of Batman, and my son played regularly in what was "Batman" Park. I am familiar with the Batman Bridge in Northern Tasmania, where I grew up, but it was not until I read "The Roving Party" that I have inquired more deeply into who this Batman was, and why his name appears in various places in Victoria as well as Tasmania.

Growing up in Tasmania, I have always been aware of "this whispering in our hearts" – the shameful secret of what the British did to aboriginal people in their "War of Extermination". But it is only as a result of my research in recent years that I have become aware that John Batman was an instrument of the authorities, conducting "roving parties" to round up aboriginal people, and killing them if they resisted. The artist John Glover, Batman's neighbour in Van Diemen's Land, described Batman as "a rogue, thief, cheat and liar, a murderer of blacks and the vilest man I have ever known". We have celebrated the colonisation of Tasmania, denying the brutal theft of the land and the murder of its people that was undertaken to achieve this end. Batman represents this brutality. How can we in conscience memorialize this man by naming parks, electorates and other public features after him.... particularly in this electorate, where the 2016 census identified over 1100 indigenous residents!

In addition to what John Batman was involved in in "Van Diemen's Land", we know that Batman offered tools, blankets and food in exchange for thousands of hectares of land in the Port Phillip area. Even the colonial government in New South Wales did not acknowledge this exploitative treaty! What is there to be proud of in this man, in the light of all we know now about our history? How can his name ever be associated with "democracy"?

I urge the Redistribution Committee to review their decision to retain this electoral name, and in the spirit of reconciliation, to consider renaming it after Simon Wonga, a respected indigenous leader whose name has already been put forward on many occasions.

Someone has to have the courage to start to put these things right.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Marianne Sherry
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