



Suggestion 12

Leongatha Community House

2 pages



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Redistribution Committee for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 768
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Committee Members

Re: Re-naming of electorate currently named McMillan

I write on behalf of the Management Committee, staff, members, and volunteers of Leongatha Community House to present our support for re-naming the electorate currently named McMillan.

Leongatha Community House Inc is a not-for-profit, community-managed, incorporated association operating in the town of Leongatha in the electorate of McMillan, and established in 1981. The association receives funding from the Victorian Department of Health & Human Services to operate a community "drop-in" centre that attempts to meet the needs of residents across the community. The Community House provides a diverse range of adult education and capacity-building activities, and supports a number of social groups, and provides a venue for meetings of many other community groups. In an average week, the Community House receives approximately 100 visitors and delivers approximately 40 hours of programs into the community. The association has a current membership of 29.

1. The case for change

- As community members learn more about the life and behaviour of Angus McMillan, it is becoming increasingly obvious that his name should not be linked to a federal electorate in modern Australia.
- Angus McMillan was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Aboriginal people in the 1840s. He orchestrated and led a number of mass-scale killings which decimated the Gunnaikurnai people and culminated in them being dispossessed of country and culture.
- Angus McMillan – a mass murderer – should not be glorified. Having a Federal electorate named in his "honour" gives the perception that Australian citizens approved of his behaviour and the atrocities he undertook are, if not celebrated, at least given tacit endorsement.

- The descendants of the people murdered by Angus McMillan should not have to endure further insult by seeing his name displayed in such prominence.

2. A new name

- Persons connected to Leongatha Community House have no suggestion for a new name and do not want to propose anything without the full engagement of the Aboriginal people and communities in Gippsland.
- The view of Leongatha Community House is that Aboriginal people MUST be consulted in the process of choosing a new name.
- It is our understanding that, for instance, the Gunnaikurnai people and the Bunurong people in the region have embarked on a process to form a “naming committee” and develop a methodology to engage local people in identifying and recommending an appropriate name for the electorate.
- Leongatha Community House strongly supports this approach, and will endorse the outcomes.

We urge the Redistribution Committee to work with local/regional initiatives – like the one being explored by the Gunnaikurnai and Bunurong communities mentioned above – to finalise a name for this electorate that does not exclude any section of the community, and is fully inclusive and cognisant of the lived history of the Aboriginal people of the region.

On behalf of the Management Committee, staff, members, and volunteers of Leongatha Community House, I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. For further information on any aspect of the contents, please contact me at Leongatha Community House by phoning 03-56623962 or emailing office@leongathacommunityhouse.org.au

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

Eunice Donovan
Coordinator