



# Suggestion 92

Women in Gippsland

3 pages

16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Members of the AEC Redistribution Committee:

Mr Tom Rogers, Mr Steve Kennedy, Mr Craig Sandy and Mr Andrew Greaves\*

**Re: Naming of the proposed new federal electorate in Victoria following the 2021 redistribution.**

Women in Gippsland (WiG) is a network established in 2014 to empower and inspire women and we are writing to implore you to consider your gender equity and prevention of violence against women responsibilities and obligations when naming this and future new electorates.

In March, on International Women's Day 2020, WiG launched a new campaign to increase the public recognition of notable women across Gippsland and beyond. Our **Put Her Name on It campaign** will address the fact that many notable, historic women remain unrecognised in public places.

WiG seeks to increase the recognition of women in public places as a way to address systemic gender inequality. By working with all levels of government to help 'make the invisible, visible', we aim to improve gender equality.

It is estimated that **as little as three percent of streets, roads, parks, buildings and statues are named after women**. It is also known that just 13% of Victorian Federal Electorates are named after women and it gets worse when we look at electorates Australian wide where it stands at just 11%.

As we work to address the massive underrepresentation of women in the naming of public places, we present this submission as a contribution to the naming of the new federal electorate in Victoria, following the 2021 redistribution.

With women making up 51% of the population is alarming, disappointing and dangerous to see the ongoing bias and discrimination in public place naming worldwide and here in Australia and Victoria.

Electorates are important public places and integral in the Australian democracy. With just 5 out of the 38 Federal Electoral Divisions in Victoria named after a woman alone WiG urges you to:

1. Sanction this new electorate specifically to be named in honour of a significant woman.
2. Establish policy and quotas to ensure action is taken to achieve parity in electorate naming in the near future.
3. Ensure that the location of new electorates be confirmed prior to EOIs for electorate naming from the public. This will ensure names of women that contributed to that specific area can be proposed and included in the deliberations.
4. Create a list of notable women of which future electorates can be named to take a proactive approach to place naming.

5. Ensure the committee responsible for electorate naming is gender balanced as per the Government's commitment to gender parity on Commonwealth Government bodies and Gender Balanced Boards.

In line with the requirements of electorate and other place naming the following names are all of deceased Australian women that made significant contributions to Victoria, Australia or the world and we offer for your consideration:

***Margaret Tucker MBE***

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/margaret-tucker-mbec>

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0093b.htm>

Margaret Tucker, or Aunty Marg, was one of Australia's earliest female Aboriginal activists and a leading figure of the 20th Century.

***Geraldine Griggs OA***

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/geraldine-briggs-ao>

A tireless campaigner for human rights who helped establish a Victorian Aboriginal and Islander Women's Council inspiring a National Aboriginal and Islander Women's Council of which Geraldine was the first president.

***Eleanor Harding***

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/eleanor-harding>

<https://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE6383b.htm>

During the 1960s, Eleanor Harding was involved in a national campaign to secure equal rights for Indigenous Australians, as a member of the Aborigines Advancement League and the Victorian branch of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI). She was part of the latter's push for constitutional change, which resulted in the 1967 Referendum.

***Mollie Dyer AM***

<https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/mollie-dyer-am>

A voice for the most vulnerable Mollie successfully fought for the right of all Aboriginal children to engage with their heritage and culture. Through her efforts she challenged institutionalised prejudices at the highest levels, forging a legacy of respect and understanding that lives on today. Best known for co-founding the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency in 1977.

***Hyllus Maris***

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/maris-hyllus-noel-14919>

Aboriginal rights campaigner, community worker, educator, poet and scriptwriter. Hyllus helped found the first registered independent Aboriginal School in Victoria, co-wrote Women of the Sun (191) that won awards including UN media peace prize, Banff television festival award, two Awgies (Aust Writers Guild), five Penguin awards.

***Joice Nankivell Loch***

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/loch-joyce-mary-nankivell-14347>

Born Qld but moved to Victoria (Boolara, Drouin and Melbourne) before heading overseas at the age of 22. Joan is Australia's most decorated woman, humanitarian and writer. Joan has been awarded 11 medals by the Governments of Poland, Greece, Serbia, Romania and Great Britain and in 1972 was appointed MBE.

### **Jean Galbraith**

<https://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/galbraith-jean.html>

<https://blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/our-stories/8-women-from-australias-history-you-should-know/>

Jean Galbraith (1906–1999) one of Australia's most influential botanist, gardeners and writers and a leader in promoting native flora. Jean spent the next 70 years writing about her gardening, guides to native wildflowers, botanical articles, children's stories and even poetry. Jean's first book, *Garden in a valley*, an autobiography, was published in 1939 (it was republished in 1985); *Wildflowers of Victoria* (1950), *Grandma Honey-pot* (1964).

### **Dame Nellie Melba**

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/melba-dame-nellie-7551>

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0332b.htm>

Nellie Melba became one of the most famous singers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was the first Australian to achieve international recognition as a classical musician. She took the pseudonym "Melba" from her home town, Melbourne.

### **Mary Rogers**

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rogers-mary-catherine-13173> and

<https://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers/biogs/AWE3955b.htm>

Mary Rogers became the first woman councillor in Victoria when she was elected to the Richmond City Council in 1920.

Beyond the benefits of gender equality which are substantial and necessary for a fair and fully functioning society, naming electorates after women:

- Reminds women that their active citizenship and contribution is valued within our community.
- Is a positive way to create a belief by young men and women, that their contributions to society are of equal value.
- Encourages women to think of themselves as future members of our parliament.

We can provide further information or support to this process if required.

Your sincerely,

Women in Gippsland

