



Further objection number 7

Dr John Bennett AM

2 pages

24th July 2017

The Secretary,
Australian Electoral Commission,
(Attention Redistribution Secretariat),
G.P.O. Box 520,
HOBART TAS. 7001.

Dear Secretary,

Proposed Federal Electoral Divisions

I refer to an advertisement published in the *Weekend Australian* of 22-23 July 2017 inviting submission of objections to current proposals of the augmented Electoral Commission for Tasmania.

I object to the first proposal **“renaming the Division of Denison to ‘Clark’, to recognise the contributions of Andrew Inglis Clark”**.

To make such a change would be, surely, to diminish and depreciate the contributions to Tasmania (and Australia more widely) of Sir William Thomas Denison, seventh [Lieutenant-] Governor (1847-1855) of the then Van Diemen’s Land, disregarding several intervening brief periods when Administrators held office.

His contribution, of outstanding significance in the development of the Colony, is reviewed in a long article by Dr C. H. Currey in (1972) 4 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 46, and expanded further in my detailed study *Reluctant Democrat: Sir William Denison in Australia 1847-1861* (Federation Press, Sydney 2011). I commenced the latter with a commendation from the *Hobart Town Advertiser* when Denison concluded his term at Hobart’s Government House in 1855 – “We take leave of a good man. Future times, when dispassionately looking back to his career amid a phase of unexampled difficulty, will accord him the merits of a great one” – as he was.

His achievements, although at times clashing with his personal wishes, included directing transported convict labour to valuable public works, overseeing the end of transportation, introducing Responsible Government, advancing public education, and reducing the public debt in years of financial stress. His conduct was always professional. Like all early vice-regal representatives in Australia he made some mistakes but was quick to recognize and correct them.

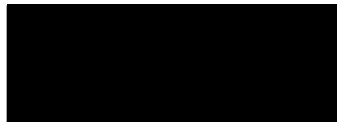
Eligible Tasmanian voters are reminded constantly on relevant election days of the contribution A. I. Clark made to the aim of proportional representation embodied in the Hare-Clark system. But little remains to acknowledge publicly the diligent service to the state achieved by Denison who, in 1856, was commissioned as “Governor-General in and over all our Colonies of New South Wales [including what would become Queensland], Van Diemen’s Land, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia”. Can Clark’s, no doubt, notable career match that?

This year, being the 110th anniversary of the introduction of the Hare-Clark system, still affords numerous opportunities of publicly recognizing Clark without debasing and dishonouring the remarkable achievements of Denison, the removal of whose name from the Division of Denison strikes me as merely change for the sake of change.

I am not a Tasmanian. My standing as an objector is that of a well recognized Australian Legal Historian, a former President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, and former Executive Member of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission. Over several years I have been the most thorough researcher, whether in Australia or in England (where his family papers are held), of Denison's entire and highly distinguished career in Australia and in India.

In short, I submit that the naming of the Division of Denison "ain't broke" and needs no fixing!

Yours faithfully,



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(M.A., D.Litt., LL.D.)

