



Objection 258

Port Melbourne Historical & Preservation Society

4 pages



Submission

Proposed change of name of the Federal Division of Melbourne Ports

The Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society (The Society) **objects** to the proposal to change the name of the Federal Electoral District of Melbourne Ports to Macnamara.

At the Society's meeting on 23rd April 2018, members unanimously resolved to object to the change of name.

The Society's reasons for objecting to the name change are:

- We note that Melbourne Ports is **not required to change** to meet the numerical requirements of the Electoral Act. In the Society's view, a name change (should it be suggested) should be triggered only when there is a requirement to change either the boundaries, or the numbers within an electorate. Neither of these changes is proposed.
- The guidelines for renaming Federal Divisions state that "every effort should be made to retain the names of original federation divisions". Yet the recommendation for the name change sets aside this fundamental guiding principle.
- The review notes that Melbourne Ports is a federation electoral division created on 26 September 1900 and was first represented in 1901. As a collective of people with an interest in how the history of a locality weaves into the national story, this is very important to us. History does not only reside in buildings and in books, but in the politics that shapes the nation through the contribution of successive representatives for this electorate.
- The review argues that the nature of the Division of Melbourne Ports has altered fundamentally away from a port to an urban and residential character. We do not agree. Melbourne Ports remains a relevant name for this electorate both for historical and contemporary reasons as explained in the points that follow.
- The Port of Melbourne has, until very recently when overtaken by Sydney, been the largest container Port in Australia and all Melburnians depend on it.
- The Victorian government leased the Port of Melbourne for 50 years in October 2016.
- Prior to leasing the Port, the Victorian government invested \$1.6 billion to ensure Webb Dock had capacity to serve Melbourne's needs into the foreseeable future.

- Infrastructure Victoria, in a report to the Victorian government in 2017, anticipates that the Port will only need to move from Webb Dock in 2055 when it will reach capacity.
- The residents of Melbourne Ports, and the wider Victorian community, rely on the Port of Melbourne for most consumer goods not manufactured locally. Since manufacturing of motor vehicles ceased in Australia in 2017, every new car on the road will come through the Port of Melbourne.
- Station Pier in Port Melbourne is Melbourne's cruise shipping terminal. A total of 85 cruise ships called at Station Pier in the 2016/17 season with bookings out to 2020/21. Cruise shipping is reported to be the fastest growing sector of tourism and Station Pier will continue to be its home in Melbourne.
- The Spirit of Tasmania sails daily from Station Pier and reinforces the role of the Port of Melbourne in the life of Melbourne Ports.
- Station Pier and associated Princes Pier have significance not only for the electorate of Melbourne Ports but for Victoria as a whole for their
 - **Association with the two World Wars** as the point of embarkation and return for Australian troops – commemorated each year with a growing attendance at the local Anzac service in view of the piers from which troops embarked. It was not only Port Melbourne servicemen who left from these piers but all those Victorians who served in World War 1.
 - **Association with post-war refugee history:** Princes Pier was the arrival point for the first refugees arriving in Victoria. The HMAS Kanimbla berthed at Princes Pier on 7 December 1947 carrying the first boatload of refugees from war torn Europe. They had travelled from Bremerhaven to Fremantle on the General Heintzelmann where they boarded the Kanimbla. They were greeted on the Pier by Australia's first Minister for Immigration, Arthur Augustus Calwell. They paused here only overnight before beginning their onward journey to Bonegilla. Interpretation of these events is a feature of the refurbished Princes Pier where local, inter-state and overseas visitors can engage with this significant period in Australian history.
 - **Association with post-war immigration history:** Between 1949 and 1966, an average of 61,000 passengers arrived every year, reaching 110,802 at its peak in 1960.¹ Many of these migrants made their lives in Melbourne Ports, and their influence is present in every facet of Australian society today.
- Many people living in Melbourne Ports, and in Victoria, have family associations with Port Melbourne – either through the ancestors entering Victoria during the Gold Rush, or through the post-war immigration period.
- The name Melbourne Ports does not offend any person or group and is value neutral.

¹ Station Pier History, Victorian Ports Melbourne <http://www.vicports.vic.gov.au/about-us/port-history/Pages/station-pier-history.aspx> accessed 3 May 2018

- In a rapidly changing, rapidly growing Melbourne, the name Melbourne Ports provides a historical anchor and a sense of identity and continuity.
- This submission does not detract in any way from the significant achievements and contribution of Dame Annie Jean Macnamara (1899–1968), for her contributions to medical science and improving the lives of patients suffering from paralysis. The Society supports naming more seats and places after women. However, the Society would prefer that if such a change was made, that the woman would have a strong connection and association with the electorate.

Summary of arguments

- Since there is no requirement for a change to either the boundaries or the number of electors, the status quo should remain, until a boundary or numerical review triggers a change.
- Melbourne Ports is a Federation Seat, and for that reason should be respected to be in accordance with the review's own guidelines.
- The Port of Melbourne is both historically significant and a fundamental part of the everyday lives of people in Melbourne Ports. The name has an enduring relevance.
- The name is a reminder of our connection and dependence on the Port of Melbourne.

About the Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society

The Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society was formed in August 1993 to:

- foster interest in and knowledge of the history of Port Melbourne
- collect and preserve items of historical interest relevant to Port Melbourne
- compile and keep a historical record of the district
- make the above knowledge and materials accessible to researchers and the people of the area
- work toward the preservation of buildings and objects of architectural, historical and social interest within Port Melbourne

The Society has 227 members made up of long standing and newer residents of Port Melbourne. It is a place where people make connections with each other through their identification and association with the history of Port Melbourne.

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3 May 2018

