



Suggestion 12

Ian Craig Marshall

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Suggestion for the naming of the new electoral division in Victoria

Submitted by: Ian Craig Marshall [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

I suggest that the new electoral division in Victoria be named after **the Hon. Joan Kirner AC**, Victoria's first woman Premier (42nd Premier of Victoria 10 August 1990 – 6 October 1992).

The Honourable Joan Elizabeth Kirner AC lived her life in service to family, education and community. Educated at state and private schools, Kirner graduated in arts from the University of Melbourne, and completed a teaching qualification.

Kirner then taught in state schools and became active in school and parents' organisations. In 1960 she married Ron Kirner, who was also a teacher and school principal and with whom she had three children. She was President of the Victorian Federation of States School Parents' Clubs, an influential education lobby from 1971 to 1977 and its executive officer from 1978–82. She was appointed to several government advisory bodies on education.¹

Having joined the Australian Labor Party in 1978, Kirner successfully ran for the Victorian parliament's Upper House in 1985. She was Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands in John Cain's Labor government, before transitioning to the Victorian Legislative Assembly at the 1988 election. Following the government's return to office, she was elected to the position of deputy premier and given the Education portfolio.

After the resignation of John Cain in 1990, Kirner became Victoria's first woman premier, which position she held from 10 August 1990 until 6 October 1992. She retired from Parliament in 1994 and was succeeded by one of her former aides for the electorate of Williamstown, future premier the Hon. Stephen Bracks AC.

After leaving Parliament, Kirner remained active in community affairs and politics. Initially this led her to a leading role in the Landcare movement. Subsequently, she devoted her energies to the Australian affiliate of EMILY's List Australia, an organisation which promotes pro-choice women's careers in politics. Kirner was one of the leaders of the movement in the Labor Party to adopt a policy of setting targets for the number of women candidates in winnable electorates. She repeatedly publicly supported candidates identified with her Socialist Left faction. From January 2006, Kirner was the Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Victorian Communities.

Kirner was also a board member of Museum Victoria, operators of Melbourne Museum, Royal Exhibition Building, Scienceworks Museum and Immigration Museum, Melbourne. Kirner was a long-time advocate of abortion law reform to legalise abortion. She was an avid supporter of the Essendon Football Club.

Kirner died on 1 June 2015, aged 76 years.

¹ Vale Joan Kirner, <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/throsby/vale-joan-kirner/6525984> accessed 3/10/2020

Honours

On 26 January 1980, Kirner was named a Member of the Order of Australia for her community service.

On 1 January 2001, Kirner was awarded the Centenary Medal.

On 11 June 2012, she was named a Companion of the Order of Australia for "eminent service to the Parliament of Victoria and to the community through conservation initiatives, contributions to gender equality, the development of education and training programs and the pursuit of civil rights and social inclusion."

In May 2017 the Victorian Government recognised her legacy by offering 25 scholarships to young women, who will participate in the Joan Kirner Young and Emerging Women Leaders program.

In May 2019, the new specialist maternity and paediatric centre at Sunshine Hospital was named the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital.

One of two tunnel boring machines (TBM) to be utilised on the Metro Tunnel project is named Joan, in honour of Kirner. This TBM was officially launched on 15 August 2019.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Kirner accessed 3/10/2020