

Reconsider naming

PREMIER Will Hodgman is against dual naming, a policy that reinstalls original Aboriginal names for geographic features alongside European names. Mr Hodgman thereby stopped any review of names of inappropriately bridges and streets.

In 1829, beneath the foothills of Ben Lomond, a group of Aboriginal men, women and children were at their village. They lit a campfire. John Batman said: "we came to a number of huts ... we proceeded until we saw some smoke at a distance. I immediately ordered the men to lay down; we could hear the natives conversing distinctly, we then crept into a thick scrub and waited there until after sunset ... At about 11pm, the men were drawn up on my right by my orders intending to rush upon them, before they could arise from the ground ... Accidentally, a musket went off and the natives were running away into the thick scrub, when I ordered the men to fire.

"We only captured that night one woman and a male child two years old ... next morning we found one man very badly wounded in the ankle and knee with 10 buckshot in his body ... there were a great number of traces of blood in various directions. We learnt that 10 men and two women were wounded and would die, apart from a number shot in the legs. On Friday we left the place for my farm at Deddington (just south of Evandale) with the two men, woman and child, but the two men could not walk. I was obliged to shoot them."

In 1968, the Tasmanian government, apparently unaware of Batman's dark secret, named the Tamar River (Kanamaluka) bridge after him. Mr Hodgman now knows this history but refuses to reconsider this mistake.

Michael Mansell