Stirling Range named after governor involved in 1834 massacre should be renamed, say WA Greens

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The Stirling Range is named after WA's first governor James Stirling who was involved in the Pinjarra Massacre in 1834.(ABC Open Contributor Richard Poulish)

The Greens have called for a review of WA place names, such as Stirling Range, linked to colonial figures with known racist histories.

Among those, WA senators want reviewed, were place names linked to first state governor James Stirling and other notable figures such as William Dampier, John Forrest and John Septimus Roe.

Greens Senator Rachel Siewert said many of those European settlers were involved in terrible incidents with Aboriginal people.

"Many of these have very poor records when it comes to involvement with our First Nations communities," Senator Siewert said.

"They are not well-remembered by our First Nation communities, they should not be commemorated by having roads, places named after them."

Gnowangerup elder Ezzard Flowers says dual naming of places could be a good outcome of the review.(Sourced: Darren Hughes)

University of WA historian Chris Owen said while the group of prominent pioneers had notable exploring achievements there were documented cases of racism and prejudice, which were rarely told as part of WA's history.

Dr Owen said there were historical records of James Stirling's involvement at the Pinjarra Massacre, where an unknown number of Bindjareb Noongar people were killed by settlers, in 1834 in one of the state's bloodiest battles.

"Stirling is probably the most notorious of the early explorers," Dr Owen said.

"There's no ambiguity in it anymore, Stirling set out to punish the Noongar tribe down there for blocking expansion of the colony. He told everyone what he was going to do, went down there, did it and reported on it.

"We're not great at recognising our own history. We're very happy to celebrate the conquests, colonisation and success but not so good at explaining how that happened."