



Comment on suggestions 18

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2 pages

Redistribution Committee for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
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Dear Committee Members,

Proposals to change name and/or boundaries of Federal Division of Maribyrnong

I am writing to provide comments in response to a number of suggestions relating to changing the name and/or boundaries of the Federal Division of Maribyrnong.

I have lived in Ascot Vale, a suburb within Maribyrnong, since 1995. Until the 2013 federal election, Ascot Vale was part of the Federal Division of Melbourne, effectively its north-west corner. While we had dedicated federal members like Lindsay Tanner and Adam Bandt, the "centre of gravity" of Melbourne was really around the City of Melbourne and suburbs such as Fitzroy, Richmond, and Carlton.

After the 2013 federal election, the boundary between Melbourne and Maribyrnong changed such that Ascot Vale joined nearby suburbs such as Moonee Ponds, Essendon, Aberfeldie, and Avondale Heights in Maribyrnong. While Ascot Vale is still close to the southern extremity of Maribyrnong, it is much closer demographically to other suburbs in Maribyrnong than it is to other suburbs in Melbourne.

Ironically, the Federal Division of Maribyrnong does not include the suburb of Maribyrnong, which is part of our local community. Any cause to abolish Maribyrnong based on it being under quota can be addressed very readily by including the suburb of Maribyrnong.

I also noted some suggestions were made about the name "Maribyrnong", suggesting that as federal divisions are increasingly being named after people and less so for their geography, the name "Maribyrnong" can be abolished and the division can be split among the neighbouring divisions of Melbourne, Wills, Gorton and Fraser. I would argue that:

1. neither Prime Ministers Gorton nor Fraser have any historical connection with the suburbs and communities that comprise Maribyrnong
2. William Wills was a woefully unqualified explorer in a decidedly poorly planned and executed expedition that disregarded and alienated Indigenous peoples in its path and ended in his ignominious death from starvation and thirst while surrounded by Indigenous people living off the land
3. Lord Melbourne (whose real name was William Lamb) was a British Prime Minister who never set foot in Maribyrnong.

As a Maribyrnong constituent, I am proud that our division has an Indigenous name (albeit corrupted from the original Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung) and would urge that Indigenous names be retained ahead of those of dead white men.

Response to Suggestion 7, Michael Hedger

Mr Hedger is correct that much of Greater Melbourne's population growth is taking place in the outer suburbs, but overlooks projected population growth in Maribyrnong along the Keilor Road and Bulla Road corridors, where commercial properties are steadily being replaced by mid-rise apartment buildings. In any event, Maribyrnong's current under quota status can be addressed very readily by incorporating the Maribyrnong SA2 into the Federal Division of Maribyrnong.

Response to Suggestion 20, Cheston Mak

Mr Mak suggests that either Maribyrnong or Wills can be abolished, and in the event Wills is abolished, Maribyrnong can be re-named Wills. I would oppose the abolition of either federal division, and for reasons detailed above, would also oppose Maribyrnong being renamed for William Wills.

Response to Suggestion 32, Dr Mark Mulcair

I support Dr Mulcair's suggestion of incorporating the Keilor SA2 and Maribyrnong SA2 into the Federal Division of Maribyrnong. Despite being on the opposite bank of the Maribyrnong River from the rest of the Federal Division of Maribyrnong, they are demographically closer to suburbs and communities across the river than to adjoining suburbs on the same side of the river.

Response to Suggestion 51, Alan Thomas

Mr Thomas argues that it makes little sense to call the federal division Maribyrnong when it does not include the suburb of Maribyrnong. I agree partially, but diverge from Mr Thomas by pointing out that this is indeed a good argument for including the suburb of Maribyrnong in the federal division that bears the same name.

Response to Suggestion 57, Australian Labor Party – Victorian Branch

I broadly support the suggestion that the suburbs of Maribyrnong and Maidstone be incorporated into the Federal Division of Maribyrnong, while Kensington returns to Melbourne and Gowanbrae gets redistributed to Wills, along with the rest of the City of Merri-bek. This leaves a more contiguous collection of suburbs in Maribyrnong, among which residents send their children to school, shop, participate in sporting clubs and community organisations, and use local amenities.

I also support the suggestion that the Federal Division of Casey be abolished, or other seats like La Trobe, Menzies, and Deakin. Most of Greater Melbourne's population growth is taking place north of the Yarra River, so any reduction in the number of federal divisions in Victoria should take place south of the Yarra River.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and consider my responses to these suggestions.

Yours faithfully,

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