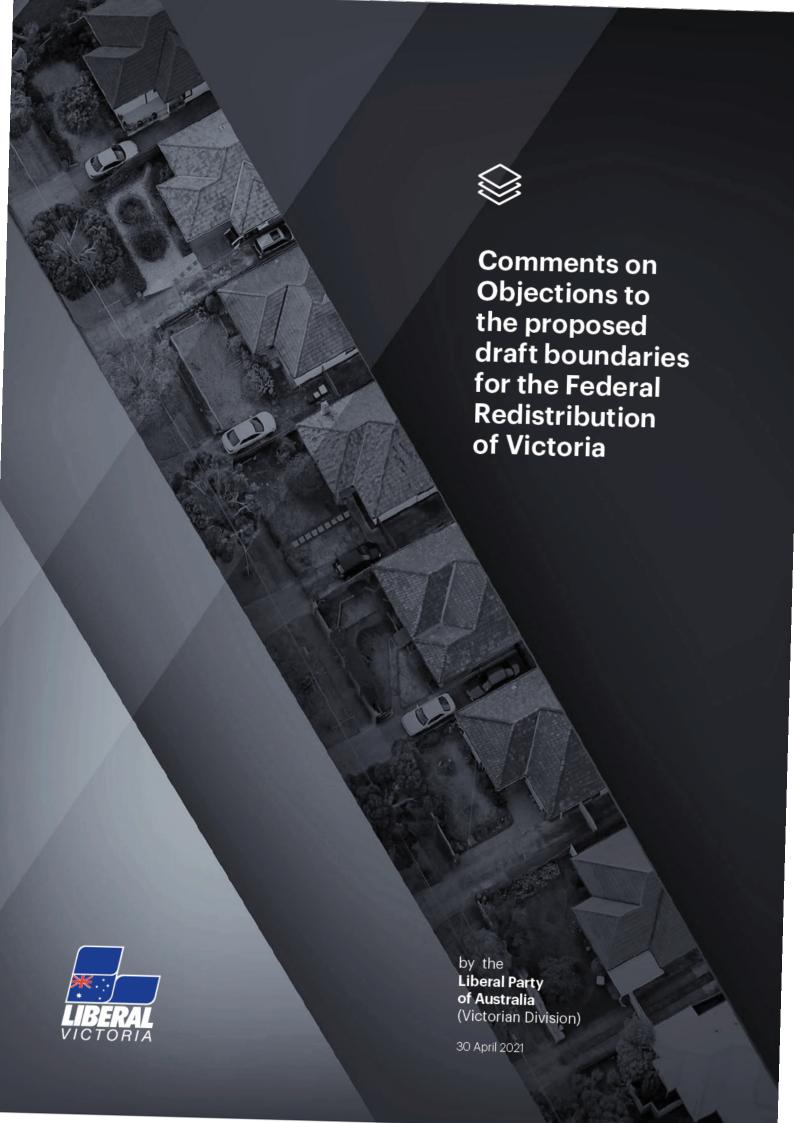




Comment on objections 34

Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Liberal Party reiterates its appreciation for the work of the Redistribution Committee and its proposed draft boundaries for the State of Victoria. It is a testament to the comprehensive and considered work of the Redistribution Committee that the vast majority of the Objections made were predominantly concerned with minor adjustments to the proposed boundaries rather than wholesale changes to the broader structural alignment of boundaries.

With the exception of a couple of Objections, mostly re-asserting substantially the same position as previously put in the Objector's related Suggestion, the major structural changes proposed by the Redistribution Committee have been only subject to minor and marginal Objections.

The Liberal Party has approached the Objections stage with the view to only suggest minor incremental amendments to the proposed boundaries in line with the Redistribution Committee's overall strategy. The Liberal Party believes that this is the correct approach and only should be deviated where there are significant issues with existing boundaries or those proposed by the Redistribution Committee. As there are no significant issues identified with the Redistribution Committee's proposed structure in the Objections, therefore, any changes should be minimal and provide incremental improvement on the grounds of community of interest between Divisions.

The Liberal Party supports the augmented Electoral Commission only making minimal adjustments to the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundaries where they improve local alignment of boundaries, rather than more significant deviations from the broader structure of boundaries throughout Victoria.

The Liberal Party acknowledges the various Objections concerning the renaming of Divisions, especially in relation to the Division of Corangamite and the proposed Division of Hawke, and refers to its views as expressed in the Liberal Party's Objection and Suggestion respectively.

The Liberal Party's Comments on Objections is structured around the major topics identified within the various Objections to boundaries and is grouped by the Divisions impacted.



PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS

In the event that the augmented Electoral Commission were to conduct an inquiry under section 72(3) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, the Liberal Party repeats its request to appear before any such inquiry.



Objections



OBJECTIONS TO THE MALLEE AND WANNON BOUNDARIES

The main Objections to the proposed draft boundaries between the Divisions of Mallee and Wannon concerned the transfer of Stawell and Halls Gap to Mallee. Charles Richardson (OB60) and the Liberal Party (OB59) proposed that this transfer is reversed by the augmented Electoral Commission due to the reduced need to transfer electors to the Division Mallee through the lack of changes to its other boundaries. Furthermore, it was suggested that in order to ensure the required enrolment is met, the augmented Electoral Commission would find better alignment of communities of interest along the Sunraysia Highway if it transferred Lexton to the Division of Mallee instead.

The Liberal Party reiterates its support for making a change along the lines of its Objection (OB59) and that of Dr Richardson (OB60).



OBJECTIONS TO THE BALLARAT, WANNON AND TUCKER (CORANGAMITE) BOUNDARIES

Objections were raised to the transfer of certain parts of the Golden Plains Shire LGA from the Divisions of Wannon and Corangamite to the Division of Ballarat (OB6, OB22, OB37). These Objections primarily were opposed to the southern areas of the LGA in Inverleigh and also Teesdale and Lethbridge being transferred. The main reason for these Objections was that these areas orient more towards Geelong than Ballarat, which the Liberal Party concedes is true, however, the significant growth in the Division of Corangamite means that these areas cannot and are unlikely to be included in a Geelong based Division at this Redistribution. The Liberal Party contends that the Redistribution Committee has proposed in its draft boundaries the best compromise position for these communities by incorporating them in a Division that contains the majority of the Golden Plains Shire LGA rather than including them in the Division of Wannon that has a significantly more western centre of gravity in Hamilton and Warrnambool. For the foregoing reasons, it is best that the augmented Electoral Commission maintain the proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Ballarat, Tucker (currently Corangamite), and Wannon.

There was also a further Objection from Charles Richardson (OB60) concerning a further transfer of electors from the Division of Wannon to Ballarat in Beaufort and Skipton. While the Liberal Party understands the logic behind the proposed transfer, it is only necessitated by other unnecessary changes Dr Richardson has proposed, in particular between the proposed Divisions of Ballarat and Hawke. The Liberal Party does not believe these changes are necessary and opposes these proposed additional changes.

The Liberal Party supports the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Wannon and Tucker (currently Corangamite). It notes the Australian Labor Party (Victorian Branch) ('ALP') Objection (OB63) to transferring Anglesea to the Division of Wannon. Such a change would significantly detract from the Redistribution Committee's work to create a clearly defined Division of Tucker (currently Corangamite) that incorporates the growth corridors in and surrounding Geelong and transferring the hinterland to the west of Geelong to the Divisions of Ballarat and Wannon respectively. Anglesea is a coastal town community on the Great Ocean Road that now shares more in common demographically and on community of interest grounds with the towns to its west, including Lorne and Apollo Bay, than it does with the housing estates in and around Torquay. The Redistribution Committee got the divide right between the suburban Geelong Region and the hinterland surrounding it in its boundaries and the augmented Electoral Commission should leave this proposed boundary unchanged in its final determination.



OBJECTIONS TO THE CORIO AND TUCKER (CORANGAMITE) **BOUNDARY**

The Liberal Party notes a number of Objections to maintaining the current boundary between the Division of Corio and the proposed Division of Tucker (currently Corangamite) (OB37, OB60). The Liberal Party



reiterates its support for leaving the Division of Corio unchanged as the current boundaries meet the required enrolment and are strongly reflective of the various communities of interest and means of travel within the Geelong region.

OBJECTIONS TO THE HIGGINS AND MACNAMARA BOUNDARY

The ALP presented an Objection (OB63) to the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Higgins and Macnamara and recited its initial Suggestion for the boundary to remain along Punt and Dandenong Roads. Furthermore, the ALP also repeated their opposition to the substantially similar proposed draft boundary in the Comments on Suggestions, including in terms of the matters raised to support their objection.

The key themes in the ALP's objection to the proposed draft boundaries between the Divisions Higgins and Macnamara can be summarised as follows:

- 1. Communities of interest within the proposed Divisions
- 2. Means of communication and travel and physical features of the proposed Divisions
- 3. Boundaries of Existing Divisions
- 4. Alternative proposals

Communities of Interest

There were a significant number of Objections (OB5, OB38, OB42, OB49, OB53, OB54, OB58, OB63), led by the ALP Objection (OB63), to the boundary between the Divisions of Macnamara and Higgins on community of interest grounds. These objections were primarily based on either the apparent splitting of the Jewish community or the lack or weakness of the community links between the areas being transferred into the Division of Macnamara from Higgins and vice versa.

Firstly, to address the issues surrounding the concerns raised relating to the splitting of the Jewish community that some claim entirely resides, attends school and Synagogue, works and shops solely within the boundaries of the current Division of Macnamara and nowhere else in Melbourne. This claim is incorrect and is also undermined by the arguments of those proposing it. For example, the ALP's Objection states that the Eruv boundary demonstrates the location of the whole Jewish community in Melbourne and that the proposed changes to the boundaries of the Division of Macnamara would split the community within the Eruv boundary. What the ALP's Objection fails to acknowledge is that the Eruv boundary already extends into four Divisions: Macnamara, Higgins, Goldstein, and Hotham. Furthermore, the Eruv boundary is currently being revised and it is being extended because of the strong community links across the suburbs of Caulfield and Malvern. The Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundaries actually would improve the outcome and consolidate the majority of the territory bound by the Eruv within two Divisions: Goldstein and Higgins, rather than splitting it in three as proposed by the ALP and others.

Additionally, the Jewish community across Melbourne, but significantly in Caulfield and surrounds, has substantial links to the current Division of Higgins. Within the current Division of Higgins, the Jewish community have established groups including Chabad Carnegie, Chabad Malvern, Australian Friends of Tel Aviv University in Toorak, Kedem in Armadale, and the Jewish Climate Network in Malvern. A significant number of members of the Jewish community attend schools that are spread across schools in the Divisions of Goldstein, Kooyong and Higgins – not just within the current Division of Macnamara. The King David School, a Jewish school in Armadale (in the Division of Higgins), has 16% of their students residing in the Division of Higgins, while the other 84% come predominantly from Caulfield South and Caulfield North, which are currently in the Division of Macnamara. Similarly, Chabad Malvern caters for a large portion of people from either side of Dandenong Road with 70% of people attending their service living in the Division Higgins, while most of the other 30% living in the current Division of Macnamara.

Residents (and not just members of the Jewish community) in Caulfield North, Caulfield and Caulfield East, south of Dandenong Road frequently travel north of Dandenong Road, to access schools, shopping strips, places of worship (including churches and synagogues), and community services. The Glenferrie Road shopping strip in Malvern is a popular destination for many residents in these communities.



Also of note, during the most recent Federal Election, one in three voters at the Early Voting Centre in Malvern were from south of Dandenong Road in the current Division of Macnamara due to the convenience and ease of access of the Early Voting Centre compared to others in the Division of Macnamara.

Essentially, the Jewish community as part of and together with the broader community south of Dandenong Road shares significant communities of interest and social links with the communities to their north. Any suggestion that those communities only (or more strongly) orient westward is dubious when viewed in the context of the whole area and should be considered with a healthy dose of skepticism by the augmented Electoral Commission.

In terms of the other grounds of objection to the proposed changes to the boundary between the Divisions of Macnamara and Higgins, primarily on the basis of demographics and types of housing in the proposed Divisions, the Liberal Party would reiterate its support for the Redistribution Committee's reasoning that the higher density suburbs from Port Melbourne, Albert Park, St Kilda, Windsor, Prahran, and South Yarra share much in common demographically. While the southern bank of the Yarra River has seen significant increases in the construction of high density residential buildings, this trend has expanded to the surrounding suburbs whereby St Kilda, Prahran, and South Yarra are all growing upwards. This is in stark contrast to the suburbs to the east of Williams Road and Hotham Street where the housing stocks are markedly lower in density and there is only some medium density housing being built along public transport corridors and hubs. The Redistribution Committee found the correct boundary between these demographically distinct areas of Melbourne that the augmented Electoral Commission should uphold.

Means of communication and travel

The ALP's Objection (OB63) also erroneously claims that there are no significant transport links that cross Dandenong Road to link the proposed Division of Higgins. The Liberal Party refers back to its original Suggestion (S90) that demonstrated such links between the newly incorporated and existing parts of the proposed Division, namely, in a north-south direction: Tram Route 16 along Hawthorn Road then Glenferrie Road and bus routes 604 and 605 along Orrong Road and Kooyong Road respectively, and in a east-west direction: bus route 624 along Glen Eira Road and Neerim Road connecting Caulfield and Caulfield South with Carneigie and Murrumbeena.

Boundaries of current Divisions

While the Liberal Party supports the retention of existing boundaries of divisions where they remain compliant with the legislated criteria, it is incumbent on every Redistribution Committee to also consider the other criteria to see if there is a compelling or required reason to change any boundary. In this instance, the Liberal Party suggested and continues to suggest that there is, namely, that the nature of the different parts of the Divisions of Macnamara and Higgins are changing such that the demographics and communities within those areas are significantly different from other parts of the respective Divisions. By consolidating the higher density residential areas in the north and west of the current Division of Macnamara with those in the west of the current Division of Higgins, it is possible to create a more homogenous community of interest and improve representation in the Parliament. Additionally, the eastern part of the current Division of Macnamara, in and around Caulfield, is more similar to the remaining parts of the Division of Higgins than Southbank, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, let alone the forthcoming development in Fisherman's Bend.

It is ironic that the ALP objects on the grounds that the Redistribution Committee has considered irrelevant matters of "improving the aesthetic of the proposed boundaries" when it itself proposes that the augmented Electoral Commission consider irrelevant criteria, namely, the boundaries of State Districts. The consideration of existing boundaries in the section 66 criteria is limited to Divisions (i.e. Commonwealth Divisions) and not State District boundaries.

While there may at times be some merit in considering the boundaries of State Districts to identify communities of interest where the same legislative criteria apply in both State and Commonwealth jurisdictions, caution needs to be exercised in taking the boundaries as prima facie justification for setting boundaries. State districts are not determinative of communities of interest for the same reasons that divisions may from time to time have to compromise on the various criteria to meet legislative requirements. This caution is especially pertinent when the boundaries of the Districts in question are currently subject to a redivision as they are more than seven years old.



Alternative proposals

Implicit in the consideration to be given to Suggestions and Comments on Suggestions by the Redistribution Committee is that it will consider alternative proposals in the various suggestions and also develop and consider its own proposal. It is clear that the Redistribution Committee has done so by developing the proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Higgins and Macnamara. Furthermore, the Redistribution Committee, and also the augmented Electoral Commission, needs to be able to follow the process without having to constantly revert back to previously considered individual Suggestions and Comments on Suggestions as is outlined in section 72(3)(a) of the Electoral Act. For the foregoing reason, as the ALP Objection (OB63) does no more than substantially restate the matters raised in their Suggestion (S100) and Comments on Suggestions (CS45), no further value can be discerned from this aspect of their Objection (OB63).

OBJECTIONS TO THE KOOYONG, CHISHOLM AND HIGGINS BOUNDARIES

There were a couple of Objections (OB37, OB63) to the proposed transfer of electors from the Division of Higgins to Kooyong in Glen Iris. While an alternative was suggested that transferred a different part of the Division of Higgins to Kooyong (OB37) that would be less optimal in aligning communities of interest than that proposed by the Redistribution Committee, the significantly worse option was that proposed by the ALP in their Objection (OB63) that restated their Suggestion (S100) that part of Surrey Hills be transferred from the Division of Chisholm instead. Besides being a matter already considered by the Redistribution Committee, the transfer of electors in Glen Iris, which is a part of Boroondara City LGA like most of the Division of Kooyong, as proposed by the Redistribution Committee is by the far the superior option to transferring electors from Whitehorse City LGA in Surrey Hills.

SOBJECTIONS TO THE MENZIES, CHISHOLM AND DEAKIN BOUNDARIES

The objections relating to the proposed draft boundaries of the Divisions of Menzies, Chisholm, and Deakin can be grouped into two distinct categories. The first category seeks to re-prosecute an original Suggestion and the second category seeks to make minor adjustments to the proposed boundaries within the proposed alignment of boundaries.

The first category of objections, which include the ALP's (OB63) and some of Charles Richardson's (OB60) Objections, merely restate their respective Suggestions (S70, S100) for the alignment of the boundaries which remain substantially the same in their Objection. Clearly the Redistribution Committee has considered these Suggestions and related Comments on Suggestions and concluded that the proposed draft boundaries better adhere to the section 66 criteria and produce, overall, better boundaries in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

The second category of objections relate to minor adjustments to the proposed boundaries to allow for better alignment with locality boundaries, including the Liberal Party's (OB59), Mark Mulcair's (OB37), and part of Charles Richardson's (OB60) Objections. The Liberal Party reiterates its support for the proposed boundary between the Divisions of Menzies and Chisholm, and between the Divisions of Menzies and Deakin, while only proposing a minor adjustment to keep all of Burwood East in the Division of Chisholm. The Liberal Party contends that the augmented Electoral Commission should maintain the proposed alignment of boundaries as they provide the optimal alignment of communities within the three Divisions and only consider minor adjustments, if and where necessary that do not alter the broader alignment of these boundaries.

The Liberal Party supports the Redistribution Committee's adopted approach to the alignment of boundaries between the Divisions of Menzies, Deakin, and Chisholm. The approach enables the Division of Menzies to remain anchored in Manningham City LGA and allows Maroondah City LGA to be entirely within the Division of Deakin. By its location, Whitehorse City LGA is always going to be split between Divisions. The Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundaries are by far the best balanced outcome for the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The alternative as proposed by some Objections would see Maroondah



City LGA being further split in Croydon, using Mount Dandenong Road or the Maroondah Highway to fragment the Croydon and Ringwood communities. The Liberal Party refers back to its Suggestion (S90) where it stated that the Ringwood and Croydon activity centres share strong links with the surrounding communities either side of the Maroondah Highway while sharing minimal connectivity with Doncaster. There will always need to be compromise, however, fragmenting the Croydon and Ringwood communities in the east is by far the worse outcome than incorporating Box Hill North, Blackburn North, parts of Nunawading and Mitcham in the Division of Menzies, where they are interconnected to the north with Doncaster, Doncaster East, and Donvale.

Additionally, some Objections raised concerns about the use of Whitehorse Road as the boundary between the Divisions of Chisholm and Menzies (OB35, OB37, OB39, OB60, OB63). The Liberal Party reiterates its support for this boundary in that it is a wide arterial road that acts as a clear defining boundary between electors to its north and south. This is very similar to Plenty Road in the north of Melbourne, where it is a strong boundary between the Divisions of Cooper and Jagajaga while also splitting the suburb of Bundoora. Furthermore, these Objections tend to also suggest that Whitehorse Road is not appropriate as a boundary and yet suggest Maroondah Highway further to the east as a boundary between the Divisions of Menzies and Deakin where it is also inconsistent with their prevailing arguments. On balance, Whitehorse Road from Box Hill to Mitcham is a strong boundary that clearly distinguishes communities to its north and south without creating a disjointed and fragmented Division of Menzies that has distinct communities and activity centres separated by a more sparsely populated hinterland in between.



OBJECTIONS TO THE CHISHOLM AND HOTHAM BOUNDARY

The Liberal Party notes the Objection put forth by Mark Mulcair (OB37) to the proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Chisholm and Hotham, proposing the use of Ferntree Gully Road, then the Monash Freeway, followed by Police Road as the boundary. The Liberal Party is not opposed to this suggested alternative, as it is broadly consistent with the Liberal Party's Objection (OB59) to this boundary, namely, the split of Oakleigh East and the transfer of part of it to the Division of Chisholm, and is also broadly consistent with the Liberal Party's earlier Suggestion (S90).



OBJECTIONS TO THE BRUCE AND HOTHAM BOUNDARY

The Liberal Party believes that the ALP's Objection (OB63) to the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Bruce is a suggestion worthy of consideration by the augmented Electoral Commission as it incorporates the whole communities of Mulgrave and Noble Park North within respective single divisions. While it may appear that a more compact boundary is proposed by the Redistribution Committee, it leads to greater fragmentation of the communities enclosed by the Monash Freeway and Eastlink in Mulgrave. The reconsideration of this boundary by the augmented Electoral Commission would be consistent with achieving a better outcome for these communities that run northwest to south-east along the Princes Highway and the Cranbourne-Pakenham railway line.



SOBJECTIONS TO THE LA TROBE, BRUCE AND HOLT BOUNDARIES

The objections relating to the proposed draft boundaries of the Divisions of La Trobe, Bruce, and Holt primarily focussed on two areas: Berwick, and Clyde to Tooradin.

The main area of concern with the boundary in Berwick was to improve the splitting of the suburb and to minimise the number of Divisions between which it is split. The Liberal Party, in its Objection (OB59), raised substantially similar issues even if they deviated slightly from other Objections in terms of the alternatively proposed boundary. The Liberal Party submits that the augmented Electoral Commission should consider these Objections to using the Princes Highway through the centre of Berwick and adopt a north-south (rather than the proposed east-west along the Prince Highway) alignment of the boundary in Berwick between the Divisions of Bruce and La Trobe that better reflects the local means of travel and communication and the orientation of the community within Berwick.

The ALP (OB63) also made an Objection to the boundary between the Divisions of Holt and Bruce running through the middle of the suburb of Berwick. While the Liberal Party sees the merit in the transfer of



this part of Berwick from the proposed Division of Holt to the proposed Division of Bruce, this is a lower priority to the more significant issue of Berwick being split along the Princes Highway. The Liberal Party is not opposed to this suggested alternative if the augmented Electoral Commission is able to move the boundary within Berwick away from the Princes Highway between the proposed Divisions of Bruce and La Trobe and also achieve this change such that Berwick remained split only between the Divisions of Bruce and La Trobe.

The second major area covered by the Objections (OB59, OB60) concerned the transfer of Clyde and Tooradin from the Division of Holt to the Division of La Trobe. These Objections raised concerns about these communities orienting towards Cranbourne rather than Pakenham or other parts of Cardinia Shire LGA, while being transferred to a Division centred on Pakenham and Cardinia Shire LGA. If the augmented Electoral Commission adopts a different boundary between the Divisions of Bruce and La Trobe that incorporates more of Berwick in La Trobe, it will be possible to better align these Casey City LGA communities in Clyde and Tooradin within the Division of Holt.

Additionally, there was an Objection (OB63) to uniting all of the suburb of Lyndhurst in the Division of Isaacs. The Liberal Party did acknowledge in its Objection (OB59) that this compromise led to a better outcome overall, where on balance the suburb of Dandenong was then able to be united in the Division of Bruce, whereas Lyndhurst was already split and the proposed transfer ensured it was contained in only one Division. The Liberal Party restates its support for maintaining this proposed boundary between the Divisions of Isaacs and Holt as the best outcome overall for the Divisions of Bruce, Isaacs, and Holt.

OBJECTIONS TO THE COOPER, JAGAJAGA, MCEWEN AND **SCULLIN BOUNDARIES**

Mark Mulcair (OB37) and Charles Richardson (OB60) proposed various objections to the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundaries between the Divisions of Cooper, Jagajaga, McEwen, and Scullin. While acknowledging some merit in the concerns raised, in the context of the Redistribution Committee's proposed boundaries in the outer western and northern suburbs of Melbourne and those in northern Victoria, the Liberal Party supports the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundaries in these Divisions, as they minimise the transfer of electors while also aligning to communities of interest within these Divisions. The issue of the Division of McEwen being incongruous is the unavoidable by-product of the outskirts of Metropolitan Melbourne seamlessly melding with Regional Victoria as new housing developments are built. While the Liberal Party did propose in its original Suggestion a more substantive redistribution in this area that would improve the Division of McEwen as a distinctly peri-urban Division, on balance and in light of the structure provided by the Redistribution Committee, the proposed draft boundaries achieve the legislative intent and present strong boundaries for the component communities of the Division of McEwen vis-à-vis the Divisions to its immediate south.



OBJECTIONS TO THE MARIBYRNONG AND FRASER BOUNDARY

The ALP Objected (OB63) to the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Maribyrnong and Fraser being moved north to the Maribyrnong River. This is a very strong boundary in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne that is proposed to be a continuous boundary between Divisions from its confluence at Deep and Jackson Creeks to where it meets the Yarra River in the south. The proposed Division of Maribyrnong very decidedly incorporates the linked communities in the inner north-western suburbs of Melbourne that lie between the Maribyrnong River and Moonee Ponds Creek.

This is consistent with the long established use, that is readopted by the Redistribution Committee in this Redistribution, of the major rivers and creeks as Divisional boundaries in the north and western suburbs. Melbourne communities, especially the further away from the Central Business District, are clearly defined on either side of these creeks and rivers, for example, the Yarra River, Darebin Creek, Merri Creek, Moonee Ponds Creek, and the Maribyrnong River.

While there may be more connectivity either side of Moonee Ponds Creek or Merri Creek between Moonee Ponds, Brunswick, and Northcote, there is significantly less at the point along the Maribyrnong River as proposed by the ALP. The Liberal Party supports the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Maribyrnong and Fraser.



OBJECTIONS TO THE FRASER AND GELLIBRAND BOUNDARY

There were a number of Objections (OB37, OB44, OB55, OB59, OB60) to the Redistribution Committee's proposed draft boundary between the Divisions of Fraser and Gellibrand. These Objections primarily concerned the manner in which Yarraville was proposed to be split between the two Divisions. While the Liberal Party proposed the use of Stony Creek, the Objections presented by Charles Richardson and Mark Mulcair, among others, demonstrate some merit to considering a different boundary within Yarraville as the boundary between the two Divisions.

OBJECTIONS TO THE LALOR AND GELLIBRAND BOUNDARY

The Liberal Party notes a number of Objections (OB37, OB60) to the proposed boundary between the Divisions of Lalor and Gellibrand that suggest some minor improvements to the alignment of the boundary in Point Cook as well as the ability to partially reverse the transfers of Truganina and Williams Landing respectively to create a better alignment of communities in the south-western suburbs of Melbourne. These are consistent with the views expressed by the Liberal Party in its Objection and the Liberal Party supports their consideration by the augmented Electoral Commission.



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