



Suggestion 68

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5 pages

Dear Commissioner,

Victoria has two adjacent areas of significant population growth, divided by a small river. That river has long been seen as a natural boundary for the apportionment of the state as an appropriate delineation point between Melbourne's metropolitan area and regional Victoria and has served well in that function.

However at the last redistribution, the maintenance of an unbreakable boundary at Little River caused numerous harmful effects elsewhere. The division of Lalor was compromised by splitting the community of Point Cook in half, which led to voter confusion and the diminished voting power of a clear and cohesive community at Point Cook, which is largely separate from the remainder of the Melbourne metropolitan area and has weak links to the remainder of the division of Gellibrand. The last redistribution further affected the divisions of Corio, Corangamite, and Wannon, in Victoria's southwest because of the significant growth in the Greater Geelong area forcing Corangamite to take in electors most naturally part of Corio, because Corio could not change its northern limit. Within the western Melbourne metropolitan area, the redistribution required Gellibrand to move into Point Cook due to significant changes in the western Melbourne region, necessary after the creation of the division of Fraser. It may be time for a reconsideration of that firm boundary at Little River, given the possible positive effects of a seat encompassing the western Port Phillip region, from Lara to Werribee and the continued growth in both Greater Geelong and western Melbourne.

By removing the Lara area from Corio that division is free to accommodate approximately fifteen thousand electors currently in Corangamite who live in Geelong's southern and Bellarine peninsula suburbs. This both ensures a stronger community cohesion in Corio and in Corangamite, while allowing for the continued growth in the area to be met with two seats that can adapt to population change rather than one that cedes territory to the other.

For ease of explanation, I have labelled the proposed division as the unnamed 39th division, with those remaining areas of the current division, the remainder of Point Cook, and other adjacent areas historically part of the division of Lalor considered to be part of Lalor. I understand that, most likely, given the high number of electors in the proposed 39th division taken from the existing division of Lalor, the 39th division would have that name and the actual new division would be elsewhere.

This proposed 39th division in Victoria, by including Lara, avoids any need to take in voters from Point Cook. Point Cook could then be unified within Lalor, Gellibrand could return to more natural boundaries, and Maribyrnong could relieve pressure on the population growth in the northern suburbs by extending into its own more traditional territory. Alternatively, Gellibrand could move to include the whole of Point Cook, Fraser and Maribyrnong could expand southward, Calwell southwest-ward, and a new division could be made in the northern metropolitan area.

This proposal would require Hoppers Crossing to be split, but neatly and in a way that ensures those areas which most strongly identify with Werribee as a hub continue to be in the same division as that suburb. Those areas that are more aligned with Truganina, Laverton, and Point Cook would be able to form much of a division with those areas as

Lalor. Otherwise, the placement of the remaining part of Hoppers Crossing - North, Truganina and Laverton could be apportioned to Gorton and/or Fraser. This proposal would further allow for the end of the current minor split in the Truganina locality. The intention of this new division with time would be for the remainder of Hoppers Crossing to move out of the division in future redistributions, as both the Lara and western Wyndham areas continue to grow.

This proposal allows the Lara and surrounding community to remain whole, but causes it to be split from the remainder of the Greater Geelong local government area. It reduces the need for the division of Corangamite to enter further into suburban Geelong and allows for Corio to focus on the community of Geelong proper more fully. This proposal allows Point Cook to be wholly contained within a division but splits Hoppers Crossing. It is an imperfect solution, but the redistribution process may be helped by considering the possibility that Little River is not an impenetrable boundary if the effects elsewhere are significantly beneficial.

As the western shore of Port Phillip continues to proportionally add electors more rapidly than the state as a whole, both within the Lara and Werribee regions, and in other surrounding areas, creating a seat that keeps communities whole as much as possible may be an aim worth pursuing even if it means that strong candidates for a natural boundary such as Little River may need to be crossed or a high number of electors may need to move into new electorates. Given the long-term viability of this proposed division, and the increased viability of Corio and Corangamite, it may be appropriate for the redistribution to take this opportunity for significant but lasting change rather than constantly reacting to the rapid population growth in the area with the need to split communities in different ways at each redistribution.

I wish the commissioners well in their deliberations,

Yours,

Hugh Bartlett.

This proposal suggests:

Victorian electoral division 39, a community of interest on the western shore of Port Phillip:

FROM LALOR

All SA1s included in SA2 named as Tarneit; All SA1s included in SA2s named as Werribee - East, Werribee - South, and Werribee - West; All SA1s included in SA2 named as Wyndham Vale; All SA1s included in SA2 named as Hoppers Crossing - South; those SA1s within the SA2 named as Hoppers Crossing - North that lie to the west of Derrimut Road.

Total projected enrolment 26 January 2025:

Hoppers Crossing - North (part): 3,939

Hoppers Crossing - South: 12,038

Tarneit: 26,474

Werribee - East: 12,307

Werribee - South: 11,150

Werribee - West: 14,285

Wyndham Vale: 18,948

SUBTOTAL: 99,141

FROM CORIO

All SA1s included in SA2 named as Lara.

Total projected enrolment 26 January 2025:

Lara: 15,920

SUBTOTAL: 15,920

TOTAL Projected enrolment 26 January 2025 for proposed division: 115,061

This figure is within the limits set by the permissible number of electors based on projected elector numbers.

Existing electors:

FROM LALOR

Hoppers Crossing - North (part): 3,821

Hoppers Crossing - South: 11,846

Tarneit: 21,167

Werribee - East: 12,013

Werribee - South: 9,481

Werribee - West: 11,140

Wyndham Vale: 15,604

SUBTOTAL: 85,072

FROM CORIO

Lara: 13,531

SUBTOTAL: 13,531

TOTAL existing enrolment for proposed division: 98,603

This figure is within the limits set by the permissible number of electors based on current elector numbers.

Please note that this proposal includes the SA1 2136814 (Werribee - South SA2). This SA1 is both populous and slightly unfortunate in that much of the included area is most reasonably considered as part of the Point Cook community. The 1,494 current and 2,361 projected electors within this SA1 would perhaps be best served by including only that portion of electors residing below Sayers Road be included in the proposed division. I am unable to access a reliable figure for the number of electors this would affect, but a rough estimate would be that less than a third of the current electors within this SA1 live south of Sayers Road, and that most growth would be projected for those areas to the north of Sayers Road. A best guess figure would be 300-400 electors within the SA1 living south of Sayers Road.

If this SA1 were to be split in the redistribution the number of electors south of Sayers Road would be important, as without all of SA1 2136814's projected electors the division would be 309 electors short of the minimum permissible number of voters. If the number of projected voters living south of Sayers Road within the SA1 were sufficient to avoid this, it would be a sensible step to draw the boundary at that road. It is also highly probable that the exclusion of SA1 2136814, either in full or with the proposed split along Sayers Road, would leave the proposed district shy of the required number of current electors needed to fulfill requirements. In this proposal I have included the whole of SA1 2136814 due to a lack of certainty in the number of electors residing on each side of Sayers Road, to ensure that the proposal meets the requirements. An alternate proposal could remove this SA1 entirely, and include areas of SA2 Hoppers Crossing - North to the south of Hoppers Crossing Drain Reserve. The current number of electors of the SA1s south of that reserve is 1,924; the projected number is 1,909. If this substitution were made for the electors in SA1 2136814, the proposed division would remain within permissible limits for both current and projected enrolment.