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Reorientation of the McEwen Electorate Boundary to its Previous North-South Orientation

The electorate of McEwen requires redistribution to ensure that the appropriate number of electors are enrolled and to improve the suitability of the boundary in relation to the existing communities, means of communication and travel, as well as the physical features of the area.

The current McEwen boundary does not reflect existing communities of interest, increasing the possibility of fragmented and diluted planning and service delivery

Following the 2018 Victorian federal redistribution, the boundaries of McEwen have had little correlation with existing communities or physical features, and have been impractical in terms of geographic spread, number of local governments encompassed, means of travel across the electorate and in terms of the common interests of those who live within its boundaries.

McEwen is overlaid across five separate council areas, taking in only a small part of each. This creates a lack of efficiency and XXX when progressing issues within the area, resulting as it does in myriad, sometimes opposing strategies and projects across council areas. Greater cohesion, strategy and outcomes would be achieved by reducing the number of council areas that the federal seat takes in.

The 2018 redistribution also saw the orientation of the seat move from North-South, following the natural contours of the land and the existing major transportation corridor, to East-West, crossing over highways, mountain ranges and other electorates. McEwen became a horseshoe-shaped seat, with the heart of the electorate, Craigieburn, removed. This has resulted in the somewhat absurd reality of having to drive through the electorate of Calwell when moving across McEwen.

The 2018 redistribution resulted in McEwen becoming a mixed bag of pieces which seemed leftover from other electorates, with the seemingly arbitrary removal of small sections of townships and suburbs from McEwen into neighbouring electorates and vice versa. An example of this was Mernda where the proposed boundary to a couple of blocks out of the suburb the division was an arbitrary separation of the community base on no geographical or social division.

The current redistribution process is an opportunity to return a sense of cohesion and commonality to McEwen so that its electors can be best represented.

Whilst the Redistribution committee has a mighty task to meet legislative requirements and make sure electoral divisions meet section 63A of the Electoral Act. It also has the obligation to meet the five criteria as outlined in 66 (3)b.

Melbourne new communities need more to be more cohesive if we are to continue growing successfully.

McEwen is dominated by North-South oriented physical features - both natural and human made

The previous McEwen boundary was faithful to the dominant physical features of the area. Namely, the Hume Highway and the Melbourne-Sydney railway line. These themselves follow the same path carved by Merri Creek, a notable natural asset in the region which serves as a major North-South biodiversity corridor and magnet for regional leisure and community focal point.

McEwen has large swathes of open green fields bordered by Mt Disappointment to the East and heading towards the Macedon Ranges in the West. These features have contributed to this area becoming a major growth corridor, which has in turn created communities of interest.

Cohesive representation which matches the north-south oriented communities of interest will result in better economic, environmental and social outcomes

McEwen is characterised by growth. It is made up of urban, peri-urban and rural landscapes which, at its southern border, is within striking distance of Melbourne. The unending expansion of Melbourne and the race to prepare homes and suburbs for its population has resulted in the increased urbanisation of the area.

The population of McEwen shares similar priorities and concerns, residing as they do in an area of rapid urbanisation wrapping around the Hume Highway. Longterm residents have witnessed the change from rural, to peri-urban, and in some cases, urban, locations. Many new residents have joined the area in response to the availability of affordable housing and proximity to the highway and railway line.

The North Growth Corridor includes the existing townships of Beveridge, Wollert, Kalkallo and Donnybrook, Mernda, Doreen and Wallan. With towns Whittlesea, Kilmore and Broadford to their north having been targeted in the metro plans for accelerated growth.

It will be important to ensure that this growth is matched by services and infrastructure. Representation to match this growth area will strengthen the integration and appropriateness of these service locations, options and processes. A fragmented approach to representation and advocacy for this growth corridor would result in poorer services and infrastructure. The delivery of promised services to these areas is a common interest of McEwen residents and requires faithful and comprehensive representation rather than piecemeal support. There are shared needs and common goals which should be respected.

The rapid growth of the area could potentially undermine the long-term natural or non-urban uses of land in this area and must be carefully managed. For example, the protection of the biodiversity of Merri Creek along its length, rather than a cross section East-West is supported by a North-South oriented McEwen.

New industrial sites within the electorate such as the Merrifield Industrial Estate, Beveridge Freight Terminal and quarantine facility has strengthened the area's identity as a manufacturing and logistics hub. This is well-suited to the location and physical features of the electorate explained above and requires oversight across the whole area north-south, rather than separate representation for each new industrial development which has come about. McEwen now needs to be recognised as an outer-metropolitan seat, rather than a rural seat. Representation covering this north-south oriented economic growth will be important to continue developing a cohesive economic strategy for the area matched to its existing features and assets, such as the highway and railway.

Residents of McEwen are dependent of the existing North-South means of travel for their livelihoods

McEwen has a high commuter workforce which relies heavily on regional rail and road networks to travel to and from work and for day-to-day community activities. The community's reliance on the highway and railway line for their livelihoods and to access services is evident in the strong local community advocacy around transportation issues such as the addition of diamond interchanges and the upgrade of train stations.

The Hume Highway is predicted to become Australia’s busiest road by 2030. The growth of McEwen both contributes to that and will be effected by it. Representation for the community up and down the Hume Highway will be important to make sure that planning and development which occurs now is fully cognisant of the need to preserve the amenability of the Hume Highway and other major thoroughfares. This is essential for the preservation of local residents’ livelihoods.

Population Growth

The recent Federal Budget states Victoria's population growth will now be expected to have almost 400,000 fewer people by the end of 2022 than was forecast pre-COVID. Whilst overseas migration would not be a factor in any electoral vote growth the rate growth areas are now predicted to grow will be much slower allowing the Redistribution committee to allow more cohesions whilst keeping with section 63A of the Electoral Act

Proposed Electorate of McEwen

The proposed new divisional borders of McEwen would see the vast majority of the electors remain in McEwen and return previous areas such as Craigieburn Mickleham, Broadford and Mernda.

SA2_Name_2016	CED (allocation)	Actual enrolments 15 July 2020	Projected enrolment 26 January 2025
Craigieburn - Central	Calwell	5024	5045
Craigieburn - North	Calwell	6706	7700
Craigieburn - South	Calwell	10949	13321
Craigieburn - West	Calwell	9020	12478
Mickleham - Yuroke	Calwell	7541	12805
Whittlesea	Mcewen	6337	6820
Doreen	Mcewen	15882	20586
Hurstbridge	Mcewen	2703	2764
Kilmore - Broadford	Mcewen	11053	13024
Mernda	Mcewen	12858	17686
Panton Hill - St Andrews	Mcewen	4036	4252
Wallan	Mcewen	13349	15808
Submission McEwen	Total	105458	132289

Proposed Electorate of McEwen

