



Comment on objections 80

Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division)

3 pages

18 May 2018

Augmented Electoral Commission for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
Level 1
Urban Workshop
50 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Commission Members,

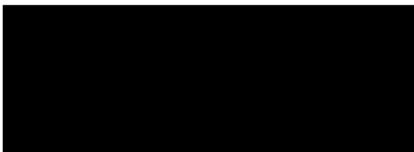
Comments on objections to the Proposed Redistribution of Victoria from the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division)

The Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) welcomes the opportunity to make submissions to the Augmented Electoral Commission for Victoria regarding the proposed redistribution of Victorian into electoral divisions.

Please find enclosed the written comments on objections from the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division).

The Liberal Party is able to provide additional information should you consider it necessary.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Demiris
State Director

Comments on Objections to the Proposed Redistribution of the State of Victoria

The Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) welcomes the opportunity to make comments on objections to the proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral divisions. It is our hope that these comments will assist the Augmented Electoral Commission in its deliberations to determine the new electoral boundaries in Victoria.

Throughout the redistribution process the Liberal Party has sought to put forward submissions and suggestions consistent with the criteria outlined in s66(3) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth)* ('the Act'). The Liberal Party has applied these requirements for its boundaries in meeting these tolerances for elector numbers within the proposed divisions.

The Liberal Party notes that the Australian Labor Party (Victorian Branch), in their objection (OB412), argues that the Augmented Electoral Commission consider speculative future redistribution scenarios when considering the proposed electoral boundaries in Victoria. While the Commission needs to consider future growth throughout the state, the Liberal Party submits that the Commission should consider the future growth within the requirements of s66(3)(a) of the Act for the required number of electors at the projection time as determined under section 63A of the Act. Future projections beyond the projection time and potential entitlements to additional electoral divisions are not within the criteria for s66(3) of the Act and to make such assumptions could prejudice the outcome of a redistribution. It is important that the redistribution process is grounded within its legislative framework to ensure confidence and transparency in the process.

Furthermore, the Australian Labor Party's objection to the Redistribution Committee placing the Nillumbik LGA into the Division of Casey ignores the limited shared communities of interest between Nillumbik LGA and Yarra Ranges LGA, as 'the Redistribution Committee recognised that the transfer of Nillumbik Shire Council into Casey could assist in balancing enrolment in divisions either side of the Yarra River divide, it concluded that the limited transport and communication connections between the areas made this connection undesirable and sought to address the imbalance elsewhere.' (Paragraph 198, Proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral divisions) The Liberal Party submits that the Redistribution Committee made the correct decision in recognising the limited transport and communication connections between these areas.

The Liberal Party notes the volume of objections received by the Redistribution Committee, in particular the significant number of objections from residents of the City of Colac and the surrounding region relating to the proposed boundary between the Divisions of Wannon and Cox/Corangamite. From these objections, there is an overwhelming view within the community that the proposed boundary between the Divisions of Wannon and Cox/Corangamite in the Colac area will be detrimental to the communities of interest in the area and their representation in the Commonwealth Parliament.

The Liberal Party shares the community's concerns and hopes the Augmented Commission seriously considers these objections and, if it holds a public inquiry into its proposed divisional boundaries in the Colac region, to ensure the local community's voice is adequately represented in the process. The Liberal Party highlights the Colac Otway Shire Council's objection (OB329) which reflects widespread community concern about the prospect of Colac and district being split from its strongest communities of interest and urges the Augmented Commission to consider its views with the respect to all of Colac Otway LGA being retained within Cox/Corangamite. Notwithstanding, the Liberal Party does not believe that the Colac Otway Shire Council's proposed inclusion of all of Golden Plains LGA in the Division of Wannon is sensible or improves the communities of interest in the proposed boundaries.

Furthermore, the Liberal Party notes the challenges faced by the Augmented Commission to ensure the 3.5% tolerance of the average divisional enrolment at the projection time across all divisions in Victoria while balancing communities of interest at the edges of regional divisions. This challenge is most acute in relation to the Golden Plains LGA where the boundaries of the Divisions of Wannon, Cox/Corangamite, and Ballarat meet. While the Redistribution Committee's proposed boundaries have tried to split the Golden Plains LGA into only two parts between the proposed Divisions of Wannon and Cox, this has led to many communities which are strongly linked to Ballarat being dislocated. The proposal of Golden Plains Shire Council (OB349) and the Australian Labor Party (Victorian Branch) (OB412) to include all of Golden Plains LGA in the proposed Division of Cox is impractical and illogical in that it creates a further disjointed division by including in the division the greater Ballarat region which has almost negligible communities of interest with urban Geelong, the Bellarine, and the coastal region.

In relation to the urban Geelong boundary between the proposed Divisions of Corio and Cox, the Liberal Party notes the strong objections (OB100, OB239, and OB357) against the changed boundary and in favour of retaining the current Barwon River alignment of the boundary. The Liberal Party believes that splitting the communities of southern Geelong between the proposed Divisions of Corio and Cox does not adequately consider the very strong shared communities of interest which exist between the communities of Highton, Belmont, and Wandana Heights, together with those further south in Waurn Ponds, Grovedale, and Armstrong Creek.

This view is further reinforced by a recent announcement concerning the duplication of the railway line through the southern suburbs of Geelong which was dependant on the strong economic and social communities of interest which exist between these suburbs. The Liberal Party also notes the City of Greater Geelong's announcement last week about plans to develop new residential communities between Batesford and Lovely Banks in Geelong's north, in the northern part of the Division of Corio.

Conclusion

The Liberal Party thanks the Redistribution Committee for the opportunity to comment on objections. The Party asks that these comments on objections be considered as the process of the redistribution of Victoria continues.