



# Objection 132

Cr Tom Joseph

2 pages

Redistribution Secretariat for Victoria  
Australian Electoral Commission  
GPO Box 768  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

23 April 2018

Dear Sir / Madam

Thank you for this opportunity to submit an objection in regard to the proposed redistribution of Victoria Report published in April 2018.

I write in particular to object to the new proposed boundary that divides the community of Mernda between the divisions of McEwen and Scullin, as well as the separation of Mernda from its neighbouring suburb of Craigieburn by placing it in the Division of Calwell.

I am a Councillor for the City of Whittlesea, having been elected to represent the North Ward which includes the communities of Mernda, Doreen and Whittlesea.

I have also lived in the City of Whittlesea for some eleven years, of which the last five years have been in Mernda. During that time I have led a number of local community campaigns to bring essential services and infrastructure to our growing suburb. I am also a past President of the Mernda & District Residents Association, the Mernda & Doreen Multicultural Association, the Mernda Diwali Festival Committee and the Chairman of the combined Social Committee of the Catholic Schools and Parish of Mernda, Doreen, Whittlesea and Kinglake.

As a community leader I am strongly opposed to the Committee's proposal to divide Mernda at Bridge Inn Road and Cravens Road, placing the north-western section of our suburb in the Division of McEwen while the south-eastern section moves to the Division of Scullin.

My objection is based on a number of factors:

- The boundary as proposed is an arbitrary division of our community which has no local relevance or recognition. The proposal represents no geographical, political or social division.
- Dividing our suburb in two works against many years of effort to build up a sense of community in what is a new and growing suburb. New communities such as ours require a fostering of togetherness and social cohesion and not further division.
- The strength of our advocacy for important infrastructure and services in our community comes from the population of our suburb. The Committee's proposed boundary divides that weight of numbers in two and diminishes our capacity to impact the approach of the proposed two federal members of parliament.

The proposed boundary divides the incontrovertible community of interest in our suburb of Mernda and threatens to diminish not only sense of unity, but our capacity to use our unity as a strength.

Making this separation of our suburb and then to go on to add another location to McEwen such as Yarrambat makes little to no sense when looked at against the requirements of the Electoral Act.

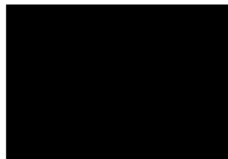
Further to my objection regarding the separation of Mernda, I would also draw to the Committee's attention the concerns of my community regarding the separation of the suburb of Craigieburn from the Division of McEwen.

Like Mernda, Craigieburn is a growing community which has far more in common with those communities developing on the urban growth boundary than those more established communities such as Epping, Broadmeadows and Roxburgh Park. We share a very similar socio-economic, ethnic and family focused demographic. We are in need of strong local representation that understands the needs of growing areas.

Craigieburn and Mernda are easily connected by our local roads, including Bridge Inn Road and Craigieburn Road and my community is strongly advocating for the building of the E6, which will further strengthen that connection.

In summary, I would draw the Committee's attention to paragraph 39 of the Redistribution report and note that the current proposal in regard to Mernda and Craigieburn meets none of the five criteria outlined in paragraph 66(3)b of the Electoral Act. With further consideration of these factors, I recommend that the Committee re-examine this proposal and place the entirety of both the suburbs of Mernda and Craigieburn within the Division of McEwen.

Yours sincerely



Cr Tom Joseph

