



# Objection 292

Connor Parker

4 pages

## **Section 1: That the boundaries for the new seat of Cox be implemented as currently proposed.**

The proposed boundaries for the seat of Cox are a significant improvement on the current distribution. While the current division of Corangamite combines suburban Geelong, the Surf Coast and the agricultural centre of Colac under a single representative, the new distribution creates more true-to life boundaries. The city of Geelong will be represented by the Member for Corio, the Surf Coast will be represented by the Member for Cox, and Victoria's agricultural west will be represented by the Member for Wannon.

*Problem 1: The suburbs of Belmont and Highton share more commonalities with other Geelong suburbs than they do with coastal communities, such as those that form the majority of the proposed seat of Cox.*

While the Barwon River forms a convenient natural boundary, residents of Geelong do not live their daily lives in this manner. Communities on both sides of the river share activity centres, services and family connections.

**Resolution 1: Placing Belmont and Highton into the proposed seat of Corio connects communities with significant commonalities, and better reflects the lived experience of residents.**

*Problem 2: Geelong is unique among regional centres in being split between seats.*

While other regional Victorian cities such as Ballarat and Bendigo occupy a single seat, Geelong is split down the middle, into two. This reduces the city's ability to advocate and seek representation as a whole.

**Resolution 2: Encompassing the majority of Geelong's suburbs within the new seat of Corio as proposed unites Geelong within a single seat, enhancing Geelong's power to advocate as a united city.**

*Problem 3: The rural city of Colac shares significant commonalities with nearby agricultural centres, such as Camperdown and Cobden.*

Placing these communities in separate seats dilutes their representation and separates regions that have a natural affinity with each other. By contrast, maintaining the current distribution, whereby Colac is placed in the same division as towns with significantly different industries and demographics, such as Lorne, isolates it from similar communities.

**Resolution 3: Moving the city of Colac into the seat of Wannon, as proposed, places agriculture-dependent communities largely in Wannon, and tourist-dependent communities largely in Cox. This increases their power to seek shared benefits and outcomes from their representatives.**

These new boundaries solve each of these three existing problems in an elegant and sensible way. As a current resident of the electorate of Corangamite, I am excited by the opportunities this distribution offers for residents in the region to seek more effective representation, and for separated communities to be able to advocate together within a single division.

I commend the AEC for its work on the proposed division, and submit that the new boundaries be drawn as proposed.

## **Section 2: That the proposed seat of Cox instead be named Connewarre**

While the boundaries of the new seat do much to benefit local residents, the proposed name is less than optimal. I would submit instead that the name Connewarre be adopted as a preferable alternative, as it eliminates many of the problems associated with the proposed name of Cox.

*Problem 1: Renaming the division from Corangamite to Cox removes one of the few aboriginal electorate names.*

Australia's aboriginal history is significantly underrepresented in our electorate names. Few seats currently make reference to aboriginal names, places and people, and Corangamite is one that remains. In fact, the AEC guidelines specifically identify that 'as far as possible, existing Aboriginal divisional names should be retained.' Renaming the seat from Corangamite to Cox would further reduce the representation of aboriginal names in our national institutions.

**Resolution 1: Naming the seat Connewarre, derived from the Wathawurrung name *Kunawarr keelingk*, ensures an aboriginal name for the electorate is retained.**

*Problem 2: Significant redistributions and a radical name change increase elector confusion about local electorates.*

With an enormous number of Victorians changing seats at this election and a state redistribution scheduled in the next term of government, electors are likely to face significant confusion about where they are enrolled and by whom they are represented in parliament. Radical name changes, such as that proposed, only serve to further this confusion. While the name Corangamite no longer makes sense for an electorate that no longer incorporates Lake Corangamite, the proposed name of Cox is a radical departure.

**Resolution 2: Connewarre, another lake name in the region, is an identifiable location in the electorate that will be recognisable to most electors. This name will make the transition to a new electorate more understandable and less disruptive.**

*Problem 3: Renaming the division removes one of the remaining federation seat names.*

In the AEC's own draft proposal, it is noted that 'the board was loath to change the name Corangamite' as it is a federation seat. While it is a sensible decision that the seat must be renamed, as the boundary of the seat does not incorporate Lake Corangamite, the proposed name retains none of the original characteristics of the name Corangamite.

**Partial resolution 3: While no renaming could perfectly resolve this problem, the name 'Connewarre' better retains many aspects of the original name - named after a lake, similar name length, same starting letter, and an aboriginal name - better upholding the legacy of the original seat name.**

*Problem 4: The proposed name 'Cox' is likely to draw, and already has drawn, adverse attention to the member and electorate.*

Immediately following the announcement of the draft name and boundaries, significant negative attention to the proposed name 'Cox' occurred on social media. This ranged from snide comments about the sound of the name, to a significant number of sexist and homophobic remarks directed at politicians (see the example in Appendix A). Naming the seat 'Cox' would draw adverse attention to the local member and the seat's electors - opening them up to ridicule of a disproportionately homophobic and sexist nature. This result does a disservice to the important work of members of parliament, the electors of the new electorate and the national profile of the seat.

**Resolution 4: The name 'Connewarre' shares none of the above problems.**

As an elector in the seat of Corangamite, I am proud of our region's aboriginal history, its natural features, and its long and important contribution to Australian democracy. I am also strongly interested in giving the community, and its member, the best possible opportunity to be represented fairly and well in Australia's political discourse. The name Connewarre upholds all these values far better than the name proposed.

In light of the above, I submit that the new seat be created in line with boundaries as proposed, and named Connewarre.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make a submission, and for the time taken to consider these concerns.

Kind regards,



Connor Parker

## Appendix A:

 **Antony Green**   
@AntonyGreenABC Following 

And I'm sorry, but the new name for Corangamite will see the member referred to in the House as the Member for Cox

12:25 PM - 6 Apr 2018

69 Retweets 193 Likes 

 33  69  193 

 **Graeme Ettinger**  @GraemeEtt · 29m  
Replying to @AntonyGreenABC  
@TimWilsonMP needs to relocate.

   

Figure 1: Commentary online regarding the name was often sexist or homophobic, referring to the current MP, or other MPs, by name when doing so.