Comment on suggestion 31

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10 pages

Comment on Suggestions

Redistribution of Commonwealth Electoral Divisions

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This Public Comment on Suggestions was lodged 30 October 2020 by

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[redacted]

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My capacity to fulfil my duties in a professional, impartial and apolitical manner is, in no way, affected by exercising my right to participate in public and political debate by lodging this public submission.

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I hold no interest in, and do not stand to receive any benefit or advantage resulting from the outcome of this redistribution. I have written this submission as a private citizen taking a personal interest in psephology and the electoral redistribution process. I am not now, nor at any time in the past been a member of any political party or similar associated organisation.

This comment is lodged claiming political neutrality. No political bias or partiality is implied within this submission and none should be inferred.

Comments regarding suggested names of divisions are provided in accordance with guidelines for naming federal electoral divisions. Comments on suggested names are provided on merit of the individual and their contribution to Australian society and do not reflect political partiality of the eponymous persons, unless specified. Comments on proposals to abolish a division name or division – should any such proposal exist – should not be taken to be a reflection of the performance or character of the eponymous person, nor the current member of Parliament representing that division.

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Introduction

I would like to lodge comment on some of the 102 suggestions submitted for the redistribution of Victorian electoral divisions. Most of my comment will be regarding the long list of names and the independent state-wide suggestions submitted by individuals.

Suggested division names

Some 50-odd division names were proposed in the 102 suggestions. The obvious name for a new division, and indeed the name suggested by all political parties and all of the individuals who submitted comprehensive state-wide suggestions, was **Hawke**.

Apart from **Hawke**, the general trend from the suggestions is that women or indigenous Australians be honoured with a division name.

There was obviously a popular campaign with links to the La Trobe University to suggest **Tucker** as a division name. Unbeknownst to me, I included **Tucker** in my list in my own suggestion.

The following table outlines all names compiled in alphabetical order. I also list any proposed renamed divisions separately.

Proposed name	Replacing	Included in Suggestion
"appropriate name" selected by local indigenous elders	Casey	S72
a prominent Chinese Australian	Chisholm	S30
the common names of the area/geographic names	All Victorian divisions	S2, S89
Appleford	New division	S14
Bandler	New division	S37, S53, S59
Barak	Casey	S23, S28, S63, S71
Barrwang	Corangamite/New division	S95
Bellear	New division	S65
Billibellary	New division	S81
Bolte	New division	S21
Brownbill	New division	S24
Bunjil	Corangamite/New division	S95
Burke	New division	S34, S70
Chapman	New division	S27
Child	New division	S24, S59
Cochrane Smith	New division	S14
Cohn	New division	S21, S65
Connewarre/Kunuwarra	Corangamite/New division	S95
Couchman	New division	S24
Cowen	New division	S24

Proposed name	Replacing	Included in Suggestion
D'Aprano	New division	S22, S65, S96
Davies	New division	S21
Dugdale	Corangamite	S24
Dunlop	Gippsland	S13
Dunlop	New division	S4
Dyer	New division	S88, S92
Faust	New division	S65
Freeman	New division	S28
Gadubanud	Corangamite/New division	S95
Galbraith	Gippsland/New division	S86, S88, S92
Gibbs	New division	S37, S53
Gillard	New division	S76
Griggs	New division	S88, S92
Harding	New division	S15, S21, S22, S37, S39, S88, S92, S96
Hawke	Corangamite	S43
Hawke	Maribyrnong	S34
Hawke	New division	S13, S31, S43, S85, S90, S97, S99, S100, S101
Hawke	Wills	S24, S70
Hoadley	New division	S18
Hunter	New division	S39
Hyllus/Maris	New division	S32, S88, S92
Kirner	Gellibrand	S24, S100
Kirner	New division	S12, S22, S25, S28, S59, S96
Loch	New division	S88, S92
Mack	New division	S14
McEwen	Mallee	S101
Melba	New division	S92, S96
Melbourne Southern	Isaacs	S2
Melzer	New division	S77
Mick	New division	S73
Morgan	New division	S24
Murray	New division	S24
Nicholls	New division	S28
Noonuccal	New division	S53
Phillips	New division	S96
Pirt Koorrook	Corangamite/New division	S95
Rogers	New division	S92, S96
Ryan	New division	S14, S22
Stephen	New division	S24
Stone	New division	S59
Surf Coast	Corangamite	S9
Truganini	New division	S59

Proposed name	Replacing	Included in Suggestion
Tucker	New division	S11, S15, S16, S20, S22, S24, S33, S35, S36, S38, S40, S41, S42, S44, S45, S46, S47, S48, S49, S50, S51, S52, S54, S55, S56, S57, S59, S60, S61, S62, S64, S66, S67, S74, S75, S78, S79, S80, S82, S83, S88, S91, S92, S94, S96
Twite	Gippsland/New division	S86
Wathaurong/Wadawurrung	Corangamite	S85
Watt	New division	S58
West	Gippsland/New division	S86

Some of the names suggested will need to be discounted. The names **Freeman** and **Gillard** represent individuals who are still living. While there is precedent in naming a division after a living individual, this is no longer a policy taken by Redistribution Committees.

The suggested names of **Hunter** and **Ryan** cannot be used as those names are already in use for other divisions. Likewise, the name **Nicholls** was suggested, however a division named this, in honour of the same individual, was created in 2018. As I provided in my suggestion, a division **Cowen** would be too similar to the existing **Cowan** to be considered.

A division named **Twite** or **Watt**, and probably even **Child**, could be subject to ridicule from those that did not understand the etymology of the name.

Some other names, such as **Bandler** or **Truganini**, would be more appropriate to be reserved for use in other states, as the individuals were more prominent in those states.

I believe any suggestions for geographic names should be discounted. The arguments presented that it would make it easier for electors to identify their divisions is not a strong argument, and the custom of using division names to honour individuals is well-established. Additionally, in a large city such as Melbourne there would seemingly need to be several divisions with very similar names. A name such as the suggested **Melbourne Southern** would be apt for up to eight current divisions. Using more local names would likely duplicate names of state electoral districts, and would become more prone to requiring renaming after a redistribution.

Likewise, I would suggest the Committee discount any division names named after indigenous tribes or nations. These names apply to specific areas, and it would be highly unlikely that a division boundary would match the area identified with any particular indigenous nation.

Of the suggestions to rename existing divisions, the campaign to rename **Casey** to **Barak** is one I did not see coming. While **Barak** certainly seems to be a worthy division name, I do not, however, feel that the arguments put forward to rename **Casey** are particularly strong. The main argument being that a local government area shares a similar name would mean that, if applied state-wide, all of the divisions of **Ballarat**, **Bendigo**, **Monash**, **Corangamite**, **La Trobe**, **Maribyrnong**, **Melbourne** and possibly even **Gippsland** would need to be renamed.

I would also suggest that the Committee not re-adopt the name **Burke** for a division. This would represent a return to a colonial-era and is not necessary. As can be seen, there are many other worthy candidates for a division name rather than a European explorer.

Of these names proposed, I suggest that a division be named **Hawke**, and then suggest a division named **Tucker**.

Renaming **Wills** as **Hawke** leaves an opportunity for a more regional division to be named **Tucker**.

I also continue to advocate for renaming **Corangamite** for the reasons I have already provided. Given no other suggestions provided seem more compelling, I continue to suggest **Dugdale** as the new division name.

If further divisions were to be proposed to be renamed, then from the list above, I would recommend that **Harding** and **Kirner** then become the most likely candidates.

Suggested boundaries

Of the suggestions that proposed changes to boundaries, I emphasise that those suggestions that take certain divisions in isolation are less likely to be viable when the changes are extrapolated across the entire state.

As usual, the suggestions of the political parties provide some unusual results in their efforts to shore up their fortunes.

Of note, I need to comment on ***S90 Liberal Party*** for their new **Hawke** division. While the concept of a division spanning Brunswick and Northcote is based on reasonable grounds (indeed I suggested a similar reconfiguration for **Wills** in 2018), the repercussions mean it creates havoc elsewhere in the state. **Wills** is stretched across Moreland City, Mooney Valley City and as far into Hume City as Melbourne Airport. **Cooper** is pushed as far as Epping, forcing **Scullin** out to Nillumbik Shire, while doing absolutely nothing to address the growth in north-west suburban Melbourne.

On the other hand, ***S100 Labor Party***, with their focus on interface councils creates some bizarre looking divisions, including **Calwell** bypassing Craigieburn, **Gorton** pushing into Wyndham City and very oddly-shaped **Bruce** and **Hotham**.

The suggestion ***S97 The Greens***, seems relatively tame. Their reliance on following exact SA1 boundaries lead to some interesting, and at times unnecessary diversions, and they push **Fraser** far into Wyndham City to create **Hawke**, but otherwise the only other remarkable part is the unnecessary attempt to restore Flemington to **Melbourne**, and subsequent compensation with **Wills**.

The ***S93 National Party*** submission appears on its merits to have some sensible changes. However, without checking how these changes interact with metropolitan Melbourne, it is impossible to determine just how they could be applied.

This is most evident in their suggested **McEwen** which excises all the suburban areas in Whittlesea City, while retaining the towns of Wallan, Kilmore and Sunbury. The submission claims that these towns are not urban, and therefore should be placed within a more rural **McEwan** division.

While this may have been true in the past, these days the areas mentioned are not bucolic and rural townships as they claim, but rather densely-developed commuter towns. The issues faced by residents of Wallan are the same as those faced by Doreen. The metropolitan trains even run as far as Sunbury.

Suggestion ***S13 Jeff Waddell*** seems guided by his notion of political fairness. Crossing Little River is an interesting, although unnecessary step, pushing parts of **Lalor** into **Gellibrand**. In other areas, such as his proposed **McEwen**, **Scullin** and **Jagajaga**, his suggestions are sensible and appropriate. His suggested new division **Hawke** appears to be compact and well-thought out. I don't agree with his suggestions in the south-eastern suburbs for **Hotham**, **Isaacs**, **Bruce**, **Holt** and **Dunkley**, and I feel that making such extensive changes to **Goldstein** is not warranted.

Suggestion ***S31 David Walsh*** seems, on the whole, logical and sensible. However, his suggested **Fraser** crosses the Maribyrnong River at the one place where there is limited access between the banks and the natural geography lends itself to cliff faces along the river banks.

Suggestion ***S34 Mark Mulcair*** appears to have a well-reasoned suggestion, as I would expect. I would accept his suggestion in full.

Suggestion ***S43 Dean Ashley*** has produced a clear logical suggestion. His suggested **McEwen** is a vast improvement on the current arrangement, although I'm not keen on his split of Craigieburn. The odd protrusion that part of Keilor makes on **Fraser** also stands out.

Suggestion ***S70 Charles Richardson*** makes some interesting changes in the south-east. His staggered and elongated **Isaacs**, **Hotham**, **Holt** and **Bruce** do not match communities of interest in any way. Apart from that, his suggested **Scullin** pushing into Mitchell Shire and **Calwell** extending from urban Broadmeadows to out past Sunbury seem odd.

Suggestion ***S85 Colin McLaren*** provides only a brief commentary in his submission, so I am unable to determine the full extent of some of his suggestions. However, from the description most of his changes seem sensible.

Suggestion ***S99 Harry Hook*** provides what looks to be a reasonable suggestion. However, he also spans **Fraser** across the Maribyrnong River along the Ring Road and Calder corridors where there is little interaction between the two sides. Additionally, his **Wills** and **Calwell** split through the middle of Glenroy is probably better achieved by transferring electors along Hilton Rd.

Suggestion ***S101 Justin Lamond*** seems to make a few more changes than necessary. Changes to both **Aston** and **Casey** are not needed, his version of **Cooper** is rather strained, as is his extensive reworking of **Dunkley**, **Flinders** and **Holt** which appears to be detrimental to communities of interest. His changes to **Mallee** with **Bendigo** and **Nicholls** would probably also draw ire from residents.