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Maroondah Business Group

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit a Comment on Objections to the proposed redistribution report.

Maroondah Business Group (MBG) has argued that this redistribution should follow two clear principles when it comes to the electorate of Deakin, which was that there be as much continuity as possible with the existing electorate of Deakin and that, as far as possible, the whole of the Maroondah municipality, which forms the core of the outer east, should remain wholly within the Deakin electorate.

This was something which the AEC had thankfully worked towards at recent redistributions; had achieved at the previous redistribution; and largely retained in its draft boundaries at this redistribution.

We are pleased that many Objections support the basic premises of the redistribution report in the outer east, including the Australian Greens Victoria (OB481) not proposing any changes to the draft boundaries and the Liberal Party (OB398) only proposing a minor adjustment. The proposed Deakin boundaries are also accepted by respected independent contributors such as Charles Richardson (OB493).

We agree with several Objections, including Crew Charleigh (OB53), Henry Rees (OB453) and Clark McKenzie (OB459), which recognise the continuing strategy of recent redistributions of making Deakin and Menzies more north-south oriented seats, a move which, as described by McKenzie, 'offer some of the most cohesive boundaries in the east of Melbourne, in recent memory'.

However, we view with alarm the Objection of Victorian Labor (OB487) which proposes a radical redrawing of boundaries in the Maroondah LGA to make Deakin and Menzies long, thin east-west seats. In the case of Deakin, almost half the electors of the seat proposed under the draft boundaries would be relocated to different seats under the Labor proposal and it would see Deakin become an electorate more based on the Whitehorse LGA than the Maroondah LGA. This would completely undo the good work of the AEC at recent redistributions and would leave the Maroondah LGA drastically split between three federal electorates.

Drawing a boundary along the Ringwood Bypass and Mt Dandenong Rd, as Victorian Labor propose, would cut the western half of the Maroondah LGA in half. It would separate the residents of the northern half of Ringwood, and the suburbs of Ringwood North and Warranwood from their local shopping centre at Eastland, their local council offices and the range of other business and leisure activities they access in the rest of Maroondah.

The Labor proposal would have an even more devastating impact in the eastern half of the Maroondah LGA dividing it across three electorates and violating every principle of community of interest. Traders in Main Street Croydon and in the Arndale Shopping Centre would not only be in different electorates, Menzies and Aston respectively, but neither would be in the one to which they are naturally most connected, which is Deakin.

We also continue to maintain that Surrey Rd and Blackburn Rd should be considered the western most point of the Deakin electorate, both now and at future redistributions, if the principle we maintain which is that Deakin's constituents should be defined as those people whose main regional shopping centre is Eastland.

We therefore oppose not only the Labor proposal to move it to Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, but also the Objections of Jeff Waddell (OB235) and Anonymous 25 (OB504) which suggest the western boundary of Deakin be Middleborough Rd, with the latter being the slightly better of the two, as it does not involve any further loss of Maroondah LGA territory. In contrast, both Dr Mark Mulcair (OB174) and William Ma (OB365) suggest moving the western boundary of Deakin to Springvale Rd, which we would argue is a more worthwhile objective for future redistributions.

We note the number of Objections (for example OB403 and OB473) to the move of a section of the Maroondah LGA, around Heathmont, from Deakin to Aston. As we stated in our own Objection, we understand that, at this redistribution, Aston had to take some territory from another LGA, rather than just remain contiguous with the City of Knox. We accept that it may be difficult to reverse this decision at this redistribution, but we hope that at the next redistribution, if the numbers allow, this area be returned to where it rightfully belongs, in Deakin, reunited with the rest of the Maroondah LGA rather than in Aston.

We also note the submission of Aaron Farr (OB160) and the Park Orchards Ratepayers Association (OB385) about combining the green wedge community of interest within one electorate. However, with Menzies, now clearly becoming a more inner urban electorate in taking more of Box Hill, and further entering suburbs such as North Balwyn, it is more likely that in future the community of interest for these localities would be better maintained within the outer eastern seat of Deakin. Dr Mark Mulcair (OB174) and Phillip Drake (OB416) recognise this trend. Further, John Ryan (OB154), Liam Mogridge (OB399), Clark McKenzie (OB469) and John Rashed (OB476) provide very strong arguments that areas such as Park Orchards and Donvale, while outside Maroondah LGA, have strong ongoing connections to Maroondah, particularly to Ringwood.

We hope this Comment on Objections is useful in your deliberations.



Kind Regards

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Chair

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