



Comment on objections 117

Australian Labor Party (Victorian Branch)

18 Pages

COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS

REDISTRIBUTION OF
VICTORIA - 2024

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
VICTORIAN BRANCH

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Labor

Executive Summary

The Australian Labor Party - Victorian Branch (Victorian Labor) thanks the Augmented Commission (“the Commission”) for the opportunity to comment on some of the over 500 objections to the Redistribution Committee’s redistribution of the boundaries of the Federal Electoral Divisions of Victoria (“the redistribution”).

We note the significant volume of objections and recognise the increased workload that will place upon the Commission and their secretariat. Victorian Labor thank you all for your hard work on this difficult task.

Victorian Labor’s comments remain consistent with our objections – this submission relates largely to the boundaries of divisions and principles for decision making which our objection focused on.

Specifically, we comment on:

- 1) The Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) suggestion to abolish Hotham.
- 2) Suggested changes to the boundary of Macnamara.
- 3) Objections relating to the Divisions of Menzies and Deakin.
- 4) Objections relating to the Divisions of Maribyrnong, Wills and Melbourne.
- 5) Objections relating to the Division of Chisholm.
- 6) Objections relating to the Divisions of Gellibrand and Fraser
- 7) Objections relating to the Divisions of Dunkley and Flinders

Public suggestions informed by incorrect enrolment projection data

Noting Victorian Liberal’s objection (OB 398, Page 3), we reiterate our call for the Commission to disregard public comments on the redistribution which relied upon incorrect enrollment projections provided by the Australian Electoral Commission (“AEC”). We reasoned in our objection that other individuals and parties would also have made manifestly different submissions, had they been provided with the correct data. Objections submitted to you confirm our reasoning.

We ask the Commission to maintain its necessarily high standards as part of the augmentation process and not rely upon any public submissions made as part of the suggestions stage.

The Victorian Division of the Australian Liberal Party’s suggestion to abolish the Division of Hotham

The Victorian Liberal suggestion to abolish the Division of Hotham is not a serious one, noting their argument for such a significant decision spans a mere 217 words.

They have not proposed an alternative which would satisfy the numerical requirements proscribed in the Electoral Act and they have not provided boundaries for the hypothetically impacted surrounding divisions.

To underscore their unseriousness, the remaining 24 pages of their 29-page objection assumes the Division of Higgins remains abolished. The peak of this farce is laid bare on page 28, which provides more detail for their proposed amended boundaries in a retained Division of Hotham,

than in their argument for its abolition.

While there is generally some merit in some objections offered by the Victorian Liberals, each objection relies upon a Victoria where Higgins is abolished. Had the Liberal party sought to truly challenge the Redistribution Committee's decision to abolish Higgins, the entirety of their objection would have assumed its retention, and their maps and arguments would have reflected as such.

Such a dynamic makes it impossible for other commenters to meaningfully engage on their unserious suggestion.

Menzies & Deakin

Victorian Labor agrees with many of the arguments proffered in the Victorian Liberal objection.

1. "Due to the proposed abolition of Higgins, the consequential change to Melbourne's eastern suburbs is severe and warrants review." – On this we agree
2. "The Liberal Party is concerned that the commission's proposed boundaries are not aligning eastern metropolitan Divisions along more clearly defined communities of interests." – On this we agree.
3. "The proposed boundaries offend natural orientation, LGAs, and demographic communities of interest." – On this we agree.
4. "This proposal presents a radical and unprecedented departure from that orientation." – On this we agree

While these propositions underpin the Liberal arguments, they are not reflected in their final boundaries.

We submit that the logic in the Liberal objections in relation to Menzies is sound and should necessarily be applied to the division of Deakin – which suffers the same negative impact from the proposed redistribution in respect to orientation, communities of interest, natural boundaries and local government borders.

The redrawn boundaries proposed in our objection, in relation to these divisions, is faithful to the logic put forward by the Liberal Party.

In our proposal for Deakin and Menzies, we have sought to better satisfy the Redistribution Committee's approach to formulating proposed electoral boundaries.

Our proposal is guided by the following objectives:

- Using highways as electorate boundaries
- Minimising the division of suburbs and localities
- Minimising the division of LGAs
- Grouping suburbs with similar demography
- Ensuring a proper orientation of electoral divisions

Using highways as electorate boundaries

As Dot Haynes OAM observes in Objection 157, the Eastern Freeway and Eastlink had always been the southern border of Menzies until 2019. We agree with objection 434 by Kieran Simpson that the border of Menzies and Deakin should run along the Eastern Freeway until the intersection with the Ringwood Bypass. Objection 53 by Crew Charleigh similarly emphasises the suitability of freeways as electorate boundaries.

Beyond the intersection with the Maroondah Freeway, our objection submits that the Deakin/Menzies border should extend along the Ringwood bypass and Mount Dandenong Rd, and that Bayswater Rd is the most suitable eastern boundary to ensure Deakin remains within quota. However, we agree that two other options are also viable.

a. Maroondah Highway

Both Objection 434 by Kieran Simpson and Objection 157 by Dot Haynes OAM argue that the Deakin/Menzies boundary should continue eastwards along the Maroondah Highway. Haynes argues that Maroondah Highway is a strong natural boundary which has led Ringwood North, Warranwood and Croydon Hills to develop as a separate community to Croydon and the southern part of Ringwood.

In order to bring Deakin back to quota, its eastern boundary would likely then need to be Kent Rd, Wicklow Avenue and Bayswater Rd. Assuming Deakin's southern boundary is returned to Dandenong Creek, this would bring Deakin to an actual 2023 enrolment of 120,456 and projected 2028 enrolment of 127,830 - well within the permissible deviation from either quota.

b. State Electorate Boundaries

Alternatively, Objection 434 by Kieran Simpson suggests that the Deakin/Menzies boundary could continue along the Ringwood/Warrandyte State boundary.

In order to bring Deakin back down to quota, its eastern boundary would likely then need to be the Ringwood/Croydon State boundary. Assuming Deakin's southern boundary is returned to Dandenong Creek, this would bring Deakin to an actual 2023 enrolment of 119,661 and projected 2028 enrolment of 127,299 - well within the permissible deviation from either quota.

Minimising the division of LGAs

The current Federal Electorate boundaries divide the city of Whitehorse between Chisholm, Kooyong, Menzies and Deakin. The AEC Draft Boundaries continue to divide Whitehorse between Menzies, Deakin and Chisholm, but now also substantially divide Manningham between Menzies and Deakin, and partially divide the Maroondah LGA between Deakin and Aston. This unnecessarily creates substantial division in LGAs with significant communities of interest.

Victorian Labor's objection submitted that the boundaries can be readjusted to unify the majority of Whitehorse in Deakin, as well as preserve the 30-year tradition of having Menzies represent the citizens of Manningham. Various other objections have supported this proposition.

Manningham LGA

A significant number of submissions expressed opposition to the fragmentation of the Manningham LGA across Deakin and Menzies. As objectors from Manningham City Council (Objection 465), Dot Haynes OAM (Objection 157), and Benjamin Close (Objection 22) observe, every single previous iteration of Menzies has included the entirety of Manningham City Council's western area, and the eastern areas of Manningham (Park Orchards, Donvale, Warranwood &c.) have been situated within Menzies since 1994.

Advocacy

As Haynes describes, Manningham City has a strong and visible sense of community spirit. Unnecessarily dividing Manningham between multiple Federal electorates will complicate advocacy for the Council, its residents, and local institutions such as the Coptic Diocese. Objection 370 by the Turnstall Square Traders Association argues that the people of Donvale benefit greatly from sharing a Federal representative with the rest of Manningham City Council, as it improves their ability to access grants, project funding and general advocacy. Objection 385 by Park Orchards Ratepayers Association lists rate rises, sewerage and heritage (such as the Park Orchards Chalet) as significant common concerns among Manningham residents.

The Green Wedge

A consistent concern raised in objections is the preservation of the 'Manningham Green Wedge' within the electorate of Deakin. Green Wedges are defined in the Melbourne 2030 strategy as:

"The open landscapes that were set aside, more than 30 years ago, to conserve rural activities and significant natural features and resources between the growth areas of Metropolitan Melbourne as they spread out along major roads and rail links"

The Manningham Green Wedge is defined by a semi-rural landscape, indigenous vegetation, scenic views, small townships, public parks, low density living and small scale agricultural enterprises. It spans the suburbs Warrandyte, Warrandyte South, Donvale, Templestowe, Park Orchards, and Wonga Park and is predominantly occupied by the Mullum Mullum Creek Linear Park (MMCLP). This includes 11 kilometres of park separating the densely populated parts of Manningham City from its older neighbourhoods. Residents on either side of the Green Wedge utilise its green space for all manner of recreation and have thus charged the former Member for Menzies with the role of maintaining and championing this space.

As Sandra Miller states in Objection 298, the Green Wedge is synonymous with Manningham City Council, which in turn is synonymous with Menzies.

The Green Wedge of Manningham is reflected in the structuring of community organisations. For example, as Aaron Farr explains in Objection 160, the local CFA brigades, Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) and Manningham Municipal Fire Management Committee (MFMPC) reflect the 'green wedge' suburbs. Farr explains that these activities have tended to be organised by Manningham City Council, and that the Member for Menzies has been an essential advocate for services in and around Mullum Mullum Creek Linear Park.

Objection 333 by Rod Faulkner speaks to the common interests of residents living in the Green Wedge, which he argues requires continued common representation. Residents of Manningham are especially concerned by attempts to increase residential density in Park Orchards, Warrandwood, Warrandyte South, and east Donvale. Faulkner observes that Deakin is a suburban electorate with no historical or cultural connection whatsoever to the Green Wedge.

Objection 370 by Turnstall Square Traders Association concurs that Deakin, unlike Menzies, is not a “green seat”. Indeed in our objection, Victorian Labor noted that the Division of Deakin has long been associated with its own parks and trails. Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, Davy Lane Reserve, and the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail (not to be confused with MMCLP) have all been predominantly situated within Deakin for over 30 years.

Residential areas and infrastructure

In Objection 27, Isabella describes the Manningham LGA as a quiet and spacious collection of suburbs - highly distinct from the increasingly built-up suburbs that have traditionally fallen within Deakin. Residents are very familiar with their local shops and restaurants. Similarly, Objection 333 by Rod Faulkner focuses on the difference in character between the City of Manningham - a leafy and low density electorate - and the Federal Electorate of Deakin - a suburban electorate with heavy industry, built on old antimony mines.

Cultural communities

Objection 282 by Veneto Club Melbourne discusses the significant Italian community in the City of Manningham, stretching from Bulleen in the West, through Templestowe, to Park Orchards and Donvale in the East. As Veneto Club argues, having a common Federal Member has made advocacy and electoral participation much simpler and easier for the Italian community. Similarly, Victorian Labor’s objection noted the 15,000 Manningham residents that identified with Greek or Italian ancestry in 2021, as well as their important centres of food and culture in Donvale, Doncaster, Park Orchards, and Bulleen.

Transport routes

Objection 27 by Isabella suggests that Manningham residents share common transportation concerns such as a lack of buses. Similarly Objection 370 by Turnstall Square Traders and Objection 385 by Park Orchards Ratepayers Association both raise the North-East Link as a local issue of significant importance to the whole of Manningham.

Psephological Justification

A significant number of objections expressed a broad sentiment that the Manningham LGA is central to the electorate of Menzies and should remain therein. These include Objection 10 by James Longford, Objection 22 by Benjamin Close, Objection 434 by Kieran Simpson, Objection 53 by Crew Cheigh and Objection 462 by Michael Ritchie.

Reunification of Whitehorse LGA

Objection 22 by Benjamin Close, Objection 456 by Liam Dwyer and Objection 498 by David Barker strongly argue that the Whitehorse LGA should be represented by a single electorate - namely, Deakin. Similarly, objection 298 by Sandra Miller argues that Deakin is a suburban seat fundamentally centred on the Whitehorse and Maroondah municipalities. Objection 434 by Kieran Simpson and Objection 288 by Darren McSweeney also agree that Deakin should extend westwards to Union Rd to substantially encompass the City of Whitehorse.

Minimising the division of suburbs and localities

The AEC Draft Boundaries divide the suburbs of Blackburn South, Blackburn, Blackburn North, Donvale, Park Orchards, Warrandyte South, Ringwood, Heathmont and Bayswater North. By contrast, our proposed boundaries only divide Ringwood, Ringwood East, Croydon, Croydon South and Bayswater North.

Victorian Labor concedes our proposed boundaries will divide the suburbs of Croydon, Croydon South and Ringwood East. We note the following excerpt from the AEC Redistribution Report, which specifically acknowledges the need to divide localities where appropriate.

“Accept that splitting local government areas or localities may be appropriate where doing so provides for a strong physical boundary and/or a clearer community of interest, or where doing so meets the numerical requirements of the Electoral Act,” (p37 redistribution report).

In prioritising which localities are preserved and which are divided, the AEC Redistribution Report stated as follows:

Committee acknowledged that it is also highly desirable that electoral boundaries be readily recognizable.... Local government area boundaries, locality and suburb boundaries, main roads, waterways, and other linear features able to be used as boundaries guided the Redistribution Committee, where appropriate.”

However, we argue that, on balance, more good is done by the unification of Blackburn South, Blackburn, Blackburn North, Donvale, Park Orchards, Warrandyte South, and Heathmont.

Heathmont

Under the 2021 Federal Electorate boundaries, the suburb of Heathmont is entirely situated within the electorate of Deakin. The AEC Draft Boundaries divide Heathmont in two along Canterbury Rd - leaving the northern part of Heathmont in Deakin, and moving the southern part to Aston.

Our objection argues that the residents of Heathmont constitute a strong community of interest, and thus proposes to restore and unite Heathmont in its entirety to Deakin. As stated on Page 25 of our objection, ‘Heathmont residents should not be split from one another by Canterbury Rd when they primarily travel and socialise in the same area.’ This proposition has received significant support in over 14 other objections.

Community of interest

As objection 359 by Ann Albrecht identifies, residents of Heathmont share strong friendships, neighbourly relationships, services, transport, parks, sports facilities, playgroups, early learning centres, kindergartens, schools, churches and community groups. Similarly, objection 388 by Prue Gill refers to the shared interests of Heathmont residents in their local business, green spaces, sustainable development, transport and community groups. Objection 393 by Don Kordick refers to the leading schools, associations, and businesses that together lay down the social, economic, and cultural foundations of the community.

Advocacy of residents and community groups

Objection 442 by David Gee expresses concern that, under the Draft Boundaries, residents of Heathmont would no longer be able to advocate to a single Federal Member of Parliament. Similarly, Objections 334 by Malcolm McDonald and Objection 317 by David Harper note that community groups in Heathmont would have to split their parliamentary advocacy between two Federal electorates.

Merits of Dandenong Creek Boundary

Objections 395 by Margaret Harrington, Objection 397 by Neil Michael Harrington, Objection 438 by Joanne Hart-Parker, Objection 460 by Donald Hamilton and Objection 474 by Graeme and Lynette Tonkin argue that Heathmont shares more in common with Ringwood than it does with Rowville or Scoresby, and thus should remain wholly within Deakin. Similarly, Objection 359 by Ann Albrecht distinguishes Heathmont - a small leafy suburb - from Bayswater - a high-density and industrial neighbourhood.

Division of Canterbury Rd Shopping Strip

Objections 395 by Margaret Harrington, Objection 397 by Neil Michael Harrington, Objection 438 by Joanne Hart-Parker and Objection 460 by Donald Hamilton also express a concern that the Draft Boundaries artificially divide Heathmont's main shopping strip in two.

Support by long-time residents

Some weight should be given to the perspectives of long-term Heathmont residents. Ann Albrecht, who submitted Objection 359, has lived in Heathmont for 50 years, describes Heathmont as a small, united and closely knit suburb with a strong interest in consistent Federal representation. She describes a sense of pride and pleasure among Heathmont residents in their leafy, peaceful and friendly suburb, and a genuine community spirit.

Similarly, Don Kordick who submitted Objection 393 has lived in Heathmont with his wife for 43 years. Kordick describes meeting friends and family at the coffee shops and restaurants on either side of Canterbury Road. Similarly, Graeme and Lynette Tonkin, who submitted Objection 475, have lived in Heathmont for 47 years. They describe spending a lot of time walking in the suburb of Heathmont, enjoying local parks, and meeting up with friends at the various local cafes on either side of Canterbury Rd.

Roslyn and Ronald Ashby, who submitted Objection 426, have lived in Heathmont for 35 years. They describe the existing situation of Heathmont within the electorate of Deakin as a workable and supportive structure which has enabled the community of Heathmont to grow and build strong connections with its Federal Representatives.

Means of transport

Objection 475 by Graeme and Lynette Tonkin clearly articulates the significance of Dandenong Creek in dividing transportation modes. Residents in Heathmont travelling by train to the city are likely to use Heathmont station, and those travelling by car use either Canterbury Rd or Whitehorse Rd/ Maroondah Highway - all of which are north of Dandenong Creek. Furthermore, as Ann Albrecht also identifies in Objection 359, there are no connecting roads between Bayswater and Heathmont, and thus one must travel via Wantirna or Bayswater North in order to move between the two suburbs.

Support by community groups

The concern of community groups regarding the division of Heathmont is also worthy of consideration. In Objection 403, the Melbourne East Netball Association expresses concern that its Heathmont facility would no longer be situated within the electorate of Deakin - thus separating the club from its competitors and diluting its capacity for advocacy.

In Objection 426, the Friends of Heathmont Village Green describe a shared aspiration by many residents across Heathmont to see a vacant lot at 127B Canterbury Rd - which sits on the proposed new boundary between Aston and Deakin - become an open green space. This is a prime example of how the proposed division of the community of Heathmont would dilute its capacity for advocacy in pursuing common objectives.

In Objection 473, the Heathmont Tennis Club expressed concern that the Draft Boundaries would divide its membership in two, and cause confusion and inefficiency in advocating on the club's behalf. Anecdotally, the fact that only a very small percentage of club members live in the current division of Aston is illustrative of the significance of Dandenong Creek as a natural geographical boundary between the two electorates.

Blackburn, Blackburn North and Blackburn South

The 2021 Federal Electorate Boundaries resulted in an unfortunate fracturing of Blackburn South across Chisholm and Deakin, and Blackburn across Chisholm, Deakin and Menzies. Not only does the AEC Proposal preserve the dividing boundary along Blackburn Rd, but it further divides residents of Blackburn North across Surrey Rd. As the Victorian Labor objection notes, 'the decision not only does nothing to mend the divide of Blackburn and Blackburn South created by the 2021 Redistribution, the decision actually expands on the divide and further impacts City of Whitehorse residents'. This argument is supported in Objection 174 by Dr Mark Mulcair and Objection 376 by Maroondah City Council, which contend that all three suburbs should fall within a single electorate.

Warrandyte South

The AEC Draft Boundaries divide the suburb of Warrandyte South along Croydon Rd. This raises significant issues for residents seeking consistent Federal representation, particularly in advocating for key objectives. For instance, in Objection 27, Isabella raises the '5-Ways' intersection (Husseys Lane, Brumby's Rd, Ringwood-Warrandyte Rd and Croydon Rd), which has long been a key issue for residents of Warrandyte and Warrandyte South.

Donvale

The AEC Draft Boundaries divide the suburb of Donvale along Springvale Rd and Old Warrandyte Rd. Objection 370 by Turnstall Square Gardens expresses grave concern that this is contrary to the interests of traders and residents in Donvale, and impairs the ability for the Traders Association to represent its stakeholders, especially given that the organisation's funding is derived from Manningham City Council. Their objection also notes that both sides of Donvale converge on Tunstall square for shopping, services and recreation, and that major transport routes on either side are not materially different. Furthermore, Springvale Road does not neatly divide Donvale into a suburban and green section, as appears to be the intent.

Park Orchards

In our Objection, Victorian Labor highlighted that the AEC's proposed redistribution not only divided Park Orchards residents from their historical Federal representative and Division, but also split Park Orchards in two - further reducing their ability to organise within their community of concern.

Grouping suburbs with similar demography

Park Orchards/Donvale and Templestowe/Warrandyte

The AEC Draft Boundaries propose to sever the majority of Park Orchards and Donvale from Menzies, leaving behind Templestowe and Warrandyte. Our objection argues that Park Orchards and Donvale should remain in Menzies.

Objection 157 by Dot Haynes OAM makes a strong case for the similarities in demography of Donvale and Park Orchards with Templestowe and Warrandyte. As he argues, Park Orchards and Donvale are both zoned as low density residential areas, much like most of Templestowe and Warrandyte, but quite unlike the majority of Deakin. Low density residential areas share significant interests, including the restriction of permissible amenities and services, green spaces and agricultural activities.

Similarly, Objection 385 by Park Orchards Ratepayers Association argues that Park Orchards is a small leafy community, much like Donvale, Warrandyte and Templestowe. By contrast, there is little neighbourhood character in common between Park Orchards and the Croydon-Ringwood area, which was built on antimony mining and since developed into a highly industrialised and metropolitan area.

Furthermore, Haynes points out that Park Orchards, Donvale, Templestowe, Warrandyte and Warranwood all form part of a CFA district and Bushfire risk area. Similarly, Objection 160 by Aaron Farr notes that all four suburbs fall within the purview of the Manningham Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) and Manningham Municipal Fire Management Committee (MFMPC).

Park Orchards/Donvale and Doncaster

Objection 333 by Rod Faulkner argues that Doncaster remains a central activity centre for residents in Manningham. Despite Park Orchards being closer to Ringwood shops than the Doncaster shops, Faulkner argues that a majority of residents feel a stronger connection to Doncaster - especially given that the two suburbs are not separated by a highway.

Similarly, Objection 370 by Turnstall Square Traders argue Donvale is more closely linked to Doncaster, not Ringwood, via Doncaster Rd. As they rightly identify, residents do not tend to cross the Eastern Highway for shopping runs, going to the doctor or other day to day activities.

Ringwood North/Warrandwood and Menzies

Objection 333 by Rod Faulkner expresses significant frustration with the previous decision to relocate Warrandwood to Deakin, given that it is a 'Green Wedge suburb' and should not be disconnected from other such suburbs in Menzies. Similarly, objection 370 by Turnstall Square Traders remarks that, under its current boundaries, Deakin is not a green seat except for Warrandwood, and as such there is a strong case for its return to Menzies.

Similarly, Objection 298 by Sandra Miller describes significant common interests between Ringwood North and the eastern suburbs of Menzies, including a commitment to low density living, green space and limits on development, as well as unique wildlife and heritage. Miller also describes shared needs and priorities such as bushfire response, infrastructure, zoning and services. As the editor of the Warrandyte Diary and Manningham Nillumbik Bulletin, Miller is well acquainted with the needs and shared attributes of the local community. Notably, her distribution locations south of the Yarra are entirely consistent with Victorian Labor's proposed boundaries for Menzies.

Ringwood, Blackburn and Box Hill

The Lilydale Rail Line is a key transport route from East to West through Box Hill, Blackburn and Ringwood. In Objection 456, Liam Dwyer describes regularly travelling between Ringwood and Box Hill via the Lilydale Line, or via parallel walking and running tracks. Similarly, in Objection 498, David Barker describes the Whitehorse-Maroonah corridor between Ringwood and Box Hill as a natural corridor for work and social life for many in the East of Melbourne.

Box Hill vs Doncaster

As the objections also reveal, attempts to unify Box Hill and Doncaster are misguided. For instance, despite a large Chinese Community on either side of the Eastern Freeway, there are significant differences in these communities. As the Chairman of the Chinese Community Society of Victoria (CCSV) Vincent Liu argues in Objection 312, the Chinese diaspora in Eastern Melbourne fall into two broadly distinct communities. Whereas the first community is oriented around Balwyn North and Doncaster, the second community stretches from Box Hill through Burwood to Glen Waverley. The two communities are divided by shopping centres/districts, transport and demography. It is thus appropriate that the Chinese community of Whitehorse falls in a distinct Federal electorate from that of the Chinese community in Boroondara and Manningham.

Furthermore, in Objection 411, Joel McCalister argues that the regions proposed to be transferred to Menzies (including Box Hill) are of a fundamentally different character to those already in Menzies.

Specifically, McCalister points to substantial demographic, geographic and economic differences on either side of the Eastern Freeway.

Ensuring a proper orientation of divisions

Victorian Labor agrees with Dot Haynes OAM in Objection 157 that the most appropriate orientation of the Deakin and Menzies is East-West. Not only has this historically been the case for Deakin and Menzies, but it has also been the case for all other outer suburban Eastern seats except Goldstein and Aston - in both cases, for good reason. An East-West orientation reflects the urban structure and transport corridors by which these areas developed. Objection 298 by Sandra Miller points to the significance of the train network - which runs from east to west - as indicative of the preferred orientation of divisions in Melbourne's South East.

Macnamara

Victorian Labor supports the boundaries proposed by the Redistribution Committee for the Division of Macnamra. We note, these boundaries are consistent with the decision of the Augmentation Committee for the 21/22 redistribution of the federal divisions of Victoria.

Response to objections:

We note there were several objections to these proposed boundaries. We submit that the Redistribution Committee is more correct in its proposal, than the objections. In support of this we offer the below rebuttal to objections, consistent with the requirements of the Electoral Act.

- 1.** The required transfer of voters into Macnamara to satisfy quota under paragraph (a) can be most easily achieved with the Commission's proposed shift of 5,251 electors from Windsor into Macnamara. The Liberal Party and other submitters' proposals would shift approximately 27,000 electors which is unnecessary and excessively disruptive. We concur with the committee's original proposal.
- 2.** A number of objections agreed with the commission's proposal that the proposed division of Melbourne should cross the Yarra River, however they propose the crossing should take place in Southbank and Fishermans Bend along the West Gate Freeway instead of South Yarra. There is no evidence that the West Gate Freeway is a physical boundary between distinct communities, and indeed the West Gate Freeway is not a feature of the communities it passes through. The West Gate serves a broader function for travel within the state. Residents in Fishermans Bend and Port Melbourne travel on bridges and crossings over the West Gate Freeway everyday to go to schools, shopping districts, dining precincts and work. This is further evidenced by the fact that communities on either side of the West Gate Freeway do not have distinct postcodes, and rather form the same neighborhood. This is in stark contrast to the commission's proposal to cross the Yarra in South Yarra - which unites major pedestrian and transport corridors which connect electors on either side of the Yarra River in Richmond and South Yarra. Additionally it unites the key physical features of Yarra Park with the Royal Botanic Gardens. Chapel St and Church St are united by foot, road, rail and tram. Residents in these areas share a number of their own tram and rail routes that have limited to no connectivity to the suburbs of Albert Park, Port Melbourne and Middle Park. The major tram route follows Chapel St up Church St to North Richmond, connecting residents to Victoria St. The east-west tram lines connect Malvern, Glen Iris, Camberwell and Toorak to

the CBD up St Kilda Road, clearly defining its role as a boundary between distinct communities on either side. In contrast, the tram lines connecting St Kilda to the CBD go through like-minded communities of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, South Wharf and Albert Park. Additionally, there are no school catchment zones for students in Southbank or Fishermans Bend to cross the Yarra. Students in these communities attend South Melbourne Primary School and Port Melbourne Primary School. In contrast, the catchment zone for Richmond Primary crosses the Yarra into South Yarra.

- 3.** A number of objections proposed that the Electorate of Melbourne should cross the Yarra taking in Southbank and Fishermans Bend, while the electorate of Macnamara should cross St Kilda Road and take in South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor. These objections ignore the clear communities which are united in these localities. These communities are oriented towards the bay, and they travel north-south and meet north-south - they do not convene in the CBD. There are no direct routes to get to the CBD from Fishermans Bend, you must either follow Lorimer St all the way around the river, merge onto the the CityLink tollway, or cross south below the West Gate Freeway and go through South Melbourne. Additionally, the premise of the long-term strategic plan for the development of Fishermans Bend is that it shares a community of interest, means of communication and travel with South Melbourne and Port Melbourne. When implemented this framework will only enhance this shared community. There are five precincts in the proposed plan, two of which are north of the West Gate, and three to its south. This plan for Fishermans Bend will only be reflected in the proposed division of Macnamara as put forward by the commission. For example, the proposed roads, cycling routes and community infrastructure do not view the West Gate Freeway as a boundary, instead they are focused on connecting communities in Fishermans Bend into South Melbourne.
- 4.** A number of objections claim that the suburbs of Prahran and South Yarra should be united in the proposed electorate of Macnamara, rather than the proposed electorate of Melbourne. This ignores the natural boundary of the 8 lane M2 St Kilda Road, and the limited means of travel between Prahran and South Yarra with the rest of Macnamara. If the Commission were to accept these suggestions they would be in effect dividing clear and distinct communities of interest that exist on either side of St Kilda Road. The Liberal Party suggests that Toorak Road as a boundary. This is not an appropriate application of the criteria because Toorak Road is clearly a central feature of a community, not a boundary between two distinct communities. Residents in South Yarra both north and south of Toorak Road congregate on Toorak Road. For example this is where South Yarra train station is located. In regards to Prahran East, the electors proposed to be transferred into the proposed division of Kooyong largely, shop, dine, travel and socialise on Malvern Road, Toorak Road and at Toorak Village' on Glenferrie Road and Malvern Central Shopping district. This is evidenced by the numerous tram lines which orient east-west into the proposed division of Kooyong. On the other hand, residents in Prahran and South Yarra orient towards Chapel St. This is further demonstrated by the school catchment districts with students in Prahran East falling into the catchment zone for Armadale primary school and Toorak primary school. Prahran is divided between three catchment areas, demonstrating a clear diverse community.

5. The Liberal Party and the Greens suggest that Prahran East should be united with Windsor. It is clear that Windsor is an appropriate locality to transfer into Macnamara, as a portion of the suburb falls into the City of Port Phillip, which entirely remains in the proposed Division of Macnamara, and given it was previously located within the electorate. This is further supported by the school catchment area for Windsor Primary School extending south of Dandenong Road into Macnamara. There is no evidence whatsoever that Prahran east of Williams Road has more in common with South Melbourne, Port Melbourne or St Kilda than it does with Armadale and Malvern. Prahran East shares clear means of travel and communication with the proposed division of Kooyong significantly more than this locality does with suburbs on the other side of St Kilda Road. Both the Liberal Party and the Greens suggest that the addition of Prahran East to the proposed division of Macnamara would unite the Jewish community in times of rising antisemitism, this is a redundant suggestion as the Jewish community north of Dandenong Road is significantly different to the community south of Dandenong Road. If the Commission were to apply this argument more broadly, they would need to look at the suburbs of Malvern and Armadale which have significantly more Jewish Australians than Prahran, this would ignore clear physical boundaries. Similarly, the Liberal Party references the LGBTIQ community as a community of interest. While it is true that St Kilda is a hub for various LGBTIQ organisations, these organisations service all of greater metropolitan Melbourne, the state and country. The fact that there are a large number of LGBTIQ people in one area, and a large number of LGBTIQ people in another area, is not evidence of a community of interest - it is evidence of a shared common characteristic between persons living in an area.

Considering the above, Victorian Labor submits the proposed Divisions of Macnamara and Melbourne, as divided by St Kilda Road, is the most appropriate application of the legislative considerations

Chisholm

Victorian Labor notes the objection submitted by the Victorian Liberals in respect to the Division of Chisholm.

Victorian Labor agrees with the proposal to move the locality of Wheelers Hill out of Chisholm, given it has historically sat within other electorates.

Victorian Labor also agrees with the principles upon which the Victorian Liberals have argued or their proposal for the southern boundary of Chisholm.

Gellibrand & Fraser

We note that there were many objections made to the Committee's proposal that shared our view that Spotswood should remain in Gellibrand and not be shifted to Fraser.

These objections (OB1, OB26, OB86, OB174, OB288, OB416, OB437, OB493 and OB504) collectively identify that the committee's proposal unnecessarily splits a strong community of interest by breaching both a strong geographic boundary (the West Gate Freeway) as well as the Local Government Boundary of Hobsons Bay City Council and Maribyrnong City Council.

We note again that using either the Spotswood locality boundary (which follow the LGA boundary) or the West Gate Freeway results in the same distribution of electors as Spotswood has zero population north of the freeway.

Dunkley & Flinders

Victorian Labor notes the Victorian Liberal objection to the removal of the locality of Mt Eliza from the division of Dunkley.

Victorian Labor opposes this objection. The division of Flinders is inextricably bound to the geography of the Mornington Peninsula and as such population growth necessities its boundaries move north, toward the Melbourne CBD. This reality is reflected in the Redistribution Committee's proposal and Victorian Labor supports it.

Maribyrnong, Wills & Melbourne

Victorian Labor notes the objection by the Australian Greens – Victoria (“Victorian Greens”) in relation to the Divisions of Wills and Melbourne.

In their objection, the Greens make several assertions that are not founded.

“The parts of the electorate that are currently to the west of Pascoe Vale Road such as Oak Park are socio-economically distinct from the other northern parts of the Wills electorate and have more in common with nearby Strathmore” (Australian Greens – Victoria Objection)

The reality is far from that – the areas of Glenroy and Oak Park either side of Pascoe Vale Road are socially and economically continuous. This can be seen in rental and household income data which distinguishes Oak Park and Glenroy from suburbs like Strathmore and Gladstone Park far more than it does between communities either side of Pascoe Vale Road.

Table 1

Suburb	Median Household Income	Percentage of dwellings rented
Hadfield (Wills)	\$1523	27.8%
Glenroy (Wills)	\$1655	37.5%
Fawkner (Wills)	\$1436	30.6%
Strathmore (Maribyrnong)	\$2440	16.7%
Strathmore Heights (Ma-ribyrnong)	\$2132	16.5%

Suburbs like Strathmore have significantly higher income and many fewer renters than suburbs on the other side of the Moonee Ponds Creek like Glenroy, Hadfield, Fawkner (see Table 1).

As highlighted in our objection, these suburbs not only have a socioeconomic connection, but they too are also bound by communities of interest – in particular Muslim and Nepalese communities. Several objections from community organisations make this point clear.

Further, our objection, census data and relevant community organisation's objections to the redistribution flatly contradict the Greens unfounded assertion that: ***“As Wills has a strong Muslim population in the north-east of the seat focused around Fawkner, we believe we should avoid splitting this population and Glenroy has a relatively minimal Muslim population.” (OB481)***

The localities of Oak Park, Glenroy and Pasco Vale South are not only connected by faith, ethnicity and socioeconomic status – they have distinct communities of interest, many of whom have objected to the proposed redistribution.

Public housing residents as a community of interest

The objections submitted by Adam Bandt MP (OB384) and the Victorian Greens (OB481), in this redistribution and prior redistributions, repeatedly argue that public housing tenants – particularly those living in high-rise estates – constitute a community of interest.

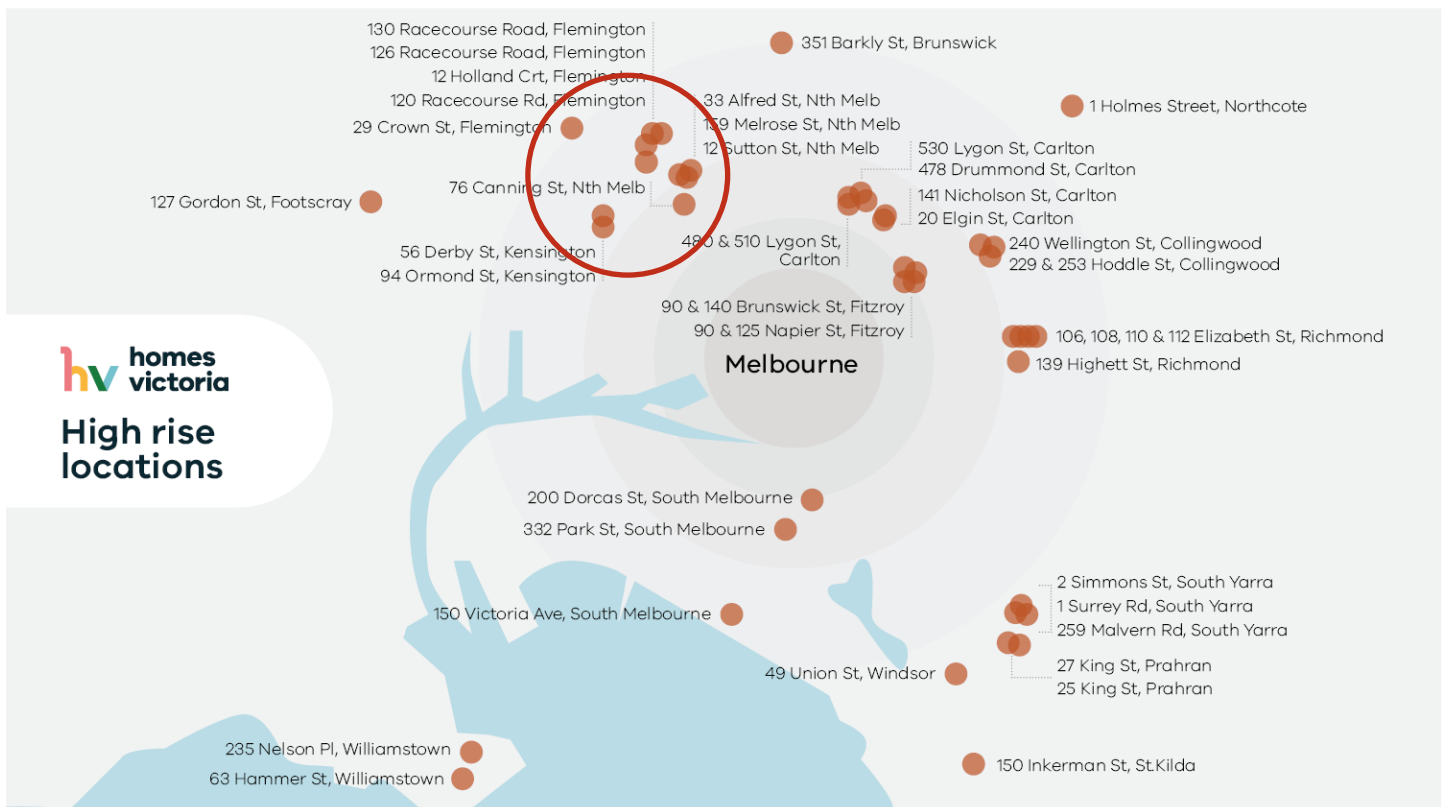
“Public housing residents are, by definition, low income and will often have common needs with respect to the Federal government, particularly in regards to accessing Services Australia, immigration and housing support” Bandt.

In suggestions, comments and objections to previous redistributions, Victorian Labor has agreed that public housing residents are indeed communities of interest, where they are connected by geography, means of travel and communications and services. Without this qualification, one could argue that any geography – no matter how distant – is connected by the fact public housing exists there.

Considering the above, we argue that our proposal to transfer the locality of North Melbourne into the Division of Maribyrnong unites a currently divided community of interest – namely, high rise public housing estates in North Melbourne (in our proposed division of Maribyrnong), Flemington and Kensington (currently in Maribyrnong). As you can see in **Map1** these estates are clustered geographically and distinctly separate from other public housing estates across in the inner-city. They access similar services provided by local government and relevant NGOs – indeed the Flemington-Kensington and Community Legal Service is located in North Melbourne. They use the same means of transport, namely Flemington Road and the 59 and 58 trams which go through the heart of the Division of Maribyrnong.

As Mr. Bandt contends, these residents have common needs with respect to the federal government and it would therefore be logical to unite this geographically located community of interest in one electorate – Maribyrnong.

Map 1



Summing up: a more logical Inner North-West of Melbourne

More in common: Flemington, Kensington & North Melbourne

More in common: Carlton North & Fitzroy North and Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood

Less in common: Carlton North, Fitzroy North & Brunswick East and Brunswick West

His objection to the 2018 redistribution (OB310), Adam Bandt made a logical case for the unification of the localities of Flemington and Kensington in one federal division. The augmentation commission saw fit then to unite those suburbs in the Division of Maribyrnong. In our objection and in our above comments, we have articulated why communities of interest – including public housing tenants – in Flemington, Kensington and North Melbourne should be united in one electorate. However, we submit that the logic outlined in Mr Bandt’s 2018 objection can be extended to include the locality of North Melbourne and therefore supports our proposed boundaries.

Victorian Labor’s objection plainly rebuts the Victorian Greens objection that “We strongly support the inclusion of Carlton North and Fitzroy North into Wills. [...] Both these areas share a similar demographic make-up with the areas of Brunswick.” As such we will not repeat our arguments.

The abolition of Higgins necessitates changes to the boundaries of the inner-city of Melbourne and the population and projected population of Wills necessitate changes as per law. We contend, however, that the Augmentation Commission can better meet the proscribed numerical requirements for the Division of Wills, Maribyrnong and Melbourne. Many of these arguments relate to Wills’ western border with Maribyrnong, but we also contend that it makes far more sense to unite North Melbourne with Flemington and Kensington in Maribyrnong and keep Carlton North & Fitzroy North and Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood united in one electorate – Melbourne – than divide those communities by putting them into Wills. This more logical division, outlined in Victorian Labor’s objection, of the inner North-West allows localities across all three electorates to be better connected and represented.



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