



Objection 40

Irene

2 pages

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Subject: Higgins redistribution objection
Date: Friday, 7 June 2024 11:56:01 AM

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Dear Australian Electoral Commission,

My name is Irene, and I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed abolition of the federal electoral seat of Higgins in Melbourne. This letter is a plea to reconsider a decision that stands to dilute the voice and representation of our cherished community in Stonnington.

The AEC's proposal to merge Higgins into neighbouring electorates such as Chisholm, Hotham, Kooyong, Macnamara, and Melbourne, while perhaps well-intentioned to balance electoral representation due to population changes, overlooks the profound implications for the residents of Higgins. The abolition of this seat threatens to undermine the very fabric of our community, with far-reaching consequences.

Firstly, the dilution of our representation is a grave concern. Higgins has long been a bastion of civic engagement, with residents actively participating in federal politics to ensure our unique local needs are met. By merging Higgins into other electorates, the distinct voice of Stonnington residents will be drowned out, leaving us with less tailored representation. Our community's influence in federal politics will be significantly reduced, and the voices of long-standing Higgins residents and community groups will be stifled.

Moreover, Higgins boasts a rich history and a unique community identity that will be disrupted by this proposed change. Our community is not just a collection of individuals; it is a tapestry woven with shared experiences, values, and aspirations. Splitting our community and absorbing it into different electorates with potentially different priorities will erode the sense of belonging and unity that has defined Higgins for generations.

The disruption of established political relationships is another critical concern. Our residents have built strong connections with our current Member of Parliament, fostering a sense of trust and advocacy. The abolition of Higgins will sever these relationships, leading to potential disruptions in services and advocacy efforts that are vital to our community's well-being.

Electoral confusion is an inevitable consequence of this proposed change. Voters will find themselves grappling with new electorates, polling places, and representatives, which could lead to decreased voter engagement and participation. The confusion and uncertainty that accompany such a transition may disenfranchise many residents, undermining the democratic process.

Furthermore, ongoing local projects and initiatives may lose momentum or be deprioritised under new representatives unfamiliar with the specific needs of the Higgins community. Our community has invested significant time and effort into these projects, and their success is closely tied to the continuity of representation.

The seat of Higgins, named after the eminent Justice H.B. Higgins, has been a cornerstone of our community's political landscape since its inception in 1949. It has been a platform for

advocating progressive policies and addressing local issues with a keen understanding of our community's unique character. From the vibrant streets of Prahran to the serene parks of Malvern, Higgins encapsulates the essence of Stonnington.

In light of these concerns, I respectfully urge the Australian Electoral Commission to reconsider the decision to abolish the federal electoral seat of Higgins. Maintaining the current electoral structure is not merely a matter of administrative convenience; it is essential for preserving the voice, identity, and representation of the Higgins community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that the AEC will carefully consider the profound impact of this decision on the residents of Higgins and act in the best interests of our community.

Yours sincerely,

Irene

