



# Objection 72

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3 pages

## **Submission to the Australian Electoral Commission on the Proposed Redistribution and Abolition of the Electorate of Higgins.**

*Submission prepared by Alan Cullen enrolled in the Higgins Electorate. 7 June 2024*

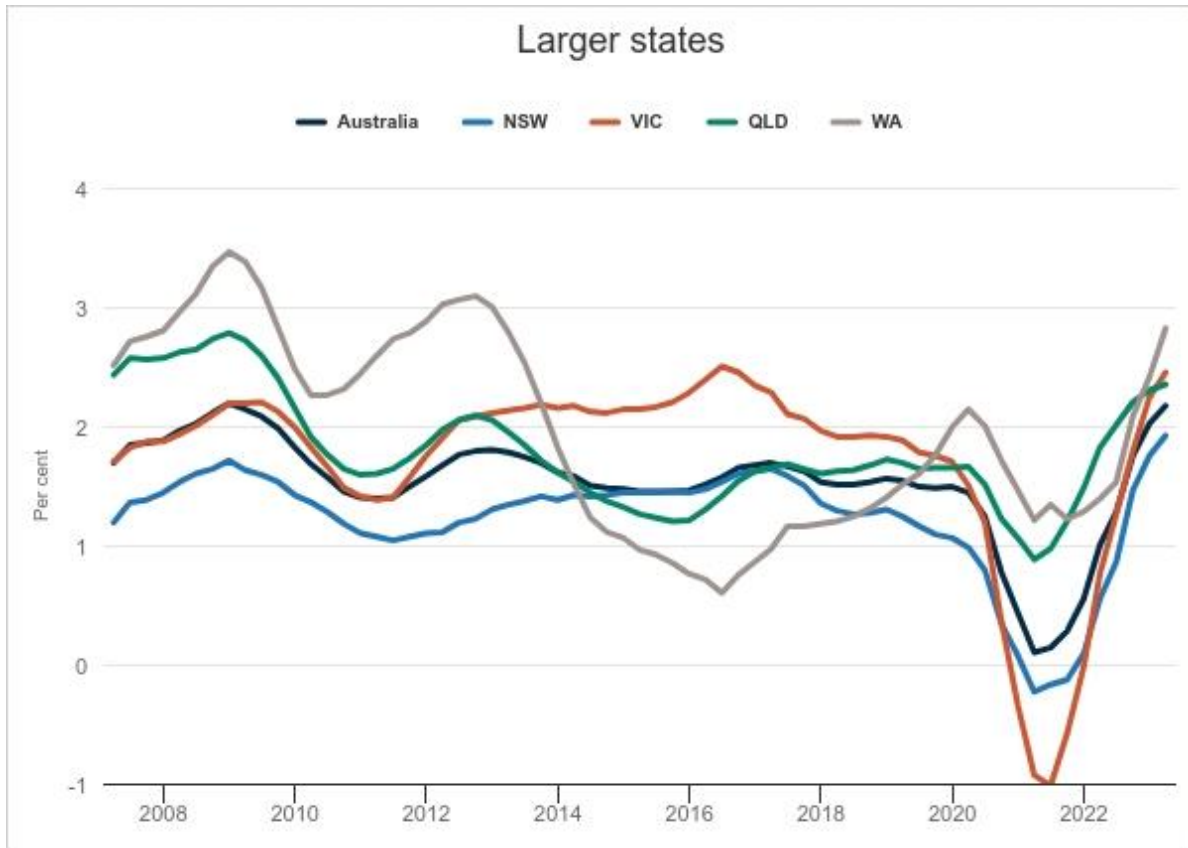
### **Determination of the Australian Electoral Commission on the numbers of Electorates in Victoria**

The AEC determined in July 2023 that a point in time estimate of the population meant that Western Australia would gain an Electorate and Victoria would lose one.

The stability of the electoral system is very important. Population estimates at a point in time need to have regard to context. The Determination of the Commission in 2023 is open to the high probability of a reversal by 2028. Western Australia has recently experienced extremely high growth in population because it is in a mining boom. As construction projects complete and peak commodity prices inevitably decline, it can be expected that, as in the past, growth will be reversed. The charts below illustrate this graphically.

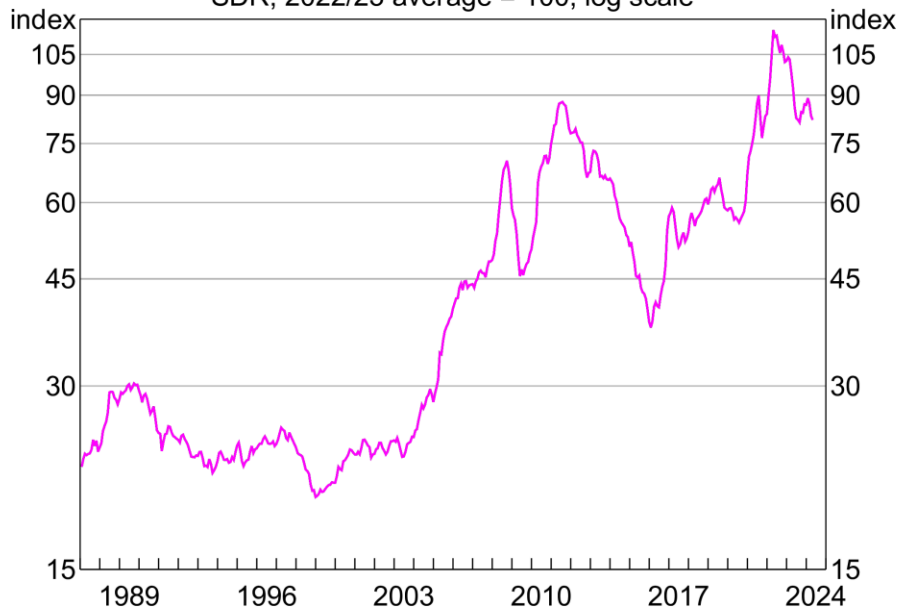
Victoria experienced the harshest COVID lockdown and its population reflected that. It is now the fastest growing state after WA and with the influx of migrants and international

students mostly settling in the eastern states that growth can be expected to accelerate.



### RBA Index of Commodity Prices

SDR, 2022/23 average = 100, log scale



Source: RBA.

## **The abolition of the electorate of Higgins.**

The number of electors in Higgins can be expected to grow strongly based on the surge in residential building construction as approvals for the densification are translated in to completed buildings. For Stonnington Council alone the population is expected to be 125,500 in 2028 and 137,725 in 2036, based on the Council's projections. It is noteworthy, that most new dwellings are for two-bedroom accommodation with an average occupancy ratio of slightly over 2 persons meaning a high ratio of electors to residents.

The Electorate of Higgins has a long history of established community connections and networks and is proud of its history. The fragmentation of Higgins into minority components of Electorates with different characteristics will be viewed as a very negative development by Higgins Electors.

## **Conclusion.**

The decisions being made by the Australian Electoral Commission on redistribution are based on highly contestable estimates and projections related to events of a temporary nature. It would be more prudent for the Commission to wait and see if these projections are correct and enduring before making such significant disruptive changes.

The electorate of Higgins is long established, with very close relationships among its electors. They are differentiated from the electorates around it. The fragmentation proposed by the Commission will mean that many electors will be enrolled in Electorates where they do not share that common bond.