



Objection 274

Jackie Yowell

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OBJECTION TO ABOLITION OF THE ELECTORATE OF HIGGINS

Submission by Jackie Yowell, resident and proud voter for 37 years

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As a active participant in our Australian democracy, which I hold dear, I object to the proposed abolition of our electorate of Hiuggins.

I understand that the demographic changes require a redistribution, and accept that is necessary for fairer democratic representation. However, the eradication of this particular electorate seems unnecessarily unfair to all those who have been more active than many of our fellow citizens in the past decade in order to achieve democratic representation of our views and concerns. To split our votes into four different electorates appears to be almost intentionally dividing to conquer! To very many of us it would seem to be much fairer if the AEC would consider alternatives - like providing for far fewer voters from each of those surrounding electorates to join Higgins – to share in our lively and democratically participatory electorate. We have had several years and two elections to educate and inform our constituents – an achievement of and for our democratic system.

Besides the argument of fairness, I would also reinforce what many of us in Higgins now know. That our electorate is historically very significant. It has gifted to the nation in the past outstandingly capable MPs, ministers, prime ministers and women Liberal politicians – more than mere politicians - and of conservative and progressive stripes. But in addition, the origins of the electorate speaks symbolically so strongly about what we hope for and expect of our representatives and leaders. HB Higgins was both an eminent judicial authority as well as a politician. He should be continued to be honoured for his courage to serve the public good, especially in the Harvester Decision, which achieved, as he hoped for:

A "fair and reasonable" living wage that was sufficient for "a human being in a civilised community" to support a wife and three children in "frugal comfort", while a skilled worker should receive an additional margin for their skills"....

It would be a mark of respect to that kind of humanity we see too rarely in present-day politics - over-riding partisan politics, to preserve Higgins as an electorate. It could surely be done without major upset. It would surely show the AEC as conscious of its role in preserving the best symbols of our democratic history.

Thank you for asking for our submissions.

Jackie Yowell

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