



# Objection 285

Iranian Women's Association

2 pages



IWA  
IRANIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

24 June 2024

The Australian Electoral Commission  
Locked Bag 4007  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Redistribution Secretariat,

**Re: Objection to the proposed boundaries of the Federal Electoral Division of Wills**

Thank you for providing members of the public with an opportunity to make a submission in relation to the proposed boundaries in Victoria.

On behalf of the Iranian Women's Association (IWA), we write to you in opposition to the proposed boundaries of the Federal Electorate of Wills, as per the report released on 31 May 2024.

Our Association strongly opposes the removal of relevant suburbs (Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick West and Glenroy) from Wills. Many community members connected with our association currently reside in these suburbs and have expressed their concerns about the community being split. The Iranian community, including cohorts who are both Farsi and Arab speaking is a community of interest in these suburbs. The community is connected by its shared national and cultural identity, and continues to grow in suburbs such as Pascoe Vale, Oak Park and Glenroy. This has enabled the community to coordinate itself and its interests, particularly in a political sense.

The suburbs of Pascoe Vale, Oak Park and Glenroy have been an important part of the Merri-Bek and Wills community for a long time. From a service provision perspective, it is critical that our local cultural groups can be supported to grow and thrive – their growth assists in service providers, Merri-Bek Council and the Federal Government to consider their needs and tailor their services accordingly.

Some of the groups our association has supported includes migrants and refugees from the Iranian community, Kurdish community, Arab speaking communities as well as Nepalese and Bhutanese communities. Religious representation within these groups varies, including those of Islamic and Christian faith. Members of our association have worked alongside these groups, including organising events or raising important issues of interest to local and Federal government representatives. The proposed redistribution will see a splitting of these groups - it is not sensible to separate refugee communities where there is a history of trauma and isolation.

Breaking up culturally similar communities who live across Oak Park and Glenroy will also disrupt the social cohesion, harmony and sense of connection communities have developed within these suburbs. Many of us feel strongly connected - splitting communities off from one another into two electorates will diminish the growth of these groups as communities of interests that have formed within Wills.

Many people from the communities we represent feel safe and supported within Merri-bek and Wills. It is hard for a refugee cohort to feel a sense of belonging to their community – when this happens we must foster this sense of belonging.

This proposal will also create an artificial split between the suburbs. At the moment, part of the border between the electorate of Wills and the electoral Division of Melbourne, which runs along Park Street and up Lygon street acts as a suitable border, separating the two divisions. The needs of communities across these suburbs are similar – they should not be split and put into Maribyrnong, an electorate that does not represent a comparable community of interest.

Changes proposed by the AEC to the division of Wills will split the community and prevent us from seeking community or political support, and as a result, communities will suffer. We need to be mindful of the needs of these communities, including many who are from new and emerging refugee and migrant groups.

We implore the Secretariat to consider these reasons and not proceed with the proposed redistribution in Wills – we ask that you enable the community to remain united.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact our association at [iranianwomensassociation@outlook.com](mailto:iranianwomensassociation@outlook.com).

Yours Sincerely,

Iranian Women's Association  
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