



Objection 345

Natalie Webster

2 pages

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[REDACTED]
South Yarra VIC [REDACTED]
Higgins Electorate (prop. Melb)

Wednesday, 26 June 2024

The Australian Electoral Commission
(Attn: Redistribution Secretariat)
Locked Bag 4007
Canberra ACT 2601

To whom it may concern,

I fiercely object to the proposed abolishment of the Higgins electoral division on a number of grounds.

Firstly, the claim that population growth east of Melbourne is slower than west of Melbourne, does not seem to reflect the increased development of high-density housing and medium to high density infill that appear to form the majority of new housing in the Higgins electorate. Suburbs such as South Yarra, Prahran and Armadale (all within the Higgins electorate), see increased proposed high-density developments that would be surely accompanied by increased electoral enrolments in the area. Whilst it may seem that the west, with its ever sprawling, low density housing appears to be growing at a greater rate than the high-density housing being developed in the seat of Higgins, this is not sustainable, and eventually, the high-density housing in areas such as Higgins will eventuate in more voters in eastern seats such as Higgins. In short, the abolishment of the Higgins electorate is short sighted at the very least.

Secondly, I wish to point out the historical and current political difference between my current electorate of Higgins and my proposed new electorate of Melbourne. The seat of Melbourne has been held by the far left for more than a decade. Indeed, both Labor and Greens have had their results increase in the last election by more than 5% combined. Whilst the swing toward Labor was significant, the Greens retained the seat, with an overwhelming 60% majority in the two-party preferred system. This trend is in great contrast to the seat of Higgins, which was traditionally held by more conservative candidates. Indeed, whilst the seat produced a swing to Labor of little over 2%, the Greens lost ground. And in the two-party preferred result there was barely a swing of 5% from the Liberals to Labor.

If the proposed changes go through, I fear that my neighbours and I will be stuck in an electorate where our voice is not heard, as it is unlikely that Labor, Liberal and Lib-Dem voters will be the majority in the enlarged Melbourne seat. This will lead to further political disillusionment of the people in these areas.

Finally, as a local, I must point out that the voters of the Melbourne and Higgins electorates do have different lives, lifestyles, beliefs and cultural backgrounds and therefore have vastly diverse needs in terms of political representation. Whilst our lives are more deeply affected by Local and State decisions, these decisions and public projects are often funded by the taxpayer at the federal level. As a result, we need good federal representation that share in our way of life and understand our needs.

On a side note, I should also point out that we, south of the river, are physically separated from the electorate north of the river. Our only connection is by three bridges, at an average distance of 1.5 km from the other. Talk about separation! Throughout history, separation by a body of water, including rivers, shows a separation of not just people but cultures and inevitably politics. The voters of Higgins are physically and culturally separated from the voters of the Melbourne electorate. They each deserve their own representation at the Federal level.

Please, reconsider the abolition of Higgins electorate. We desperately need our own representative at the federal level. Please, do not silence us.

Sincerely,

Natalie Webster,

Voter in the Higgins electorate.