



Objection 372

North Eastern Jewish Centre

2 pages

20 Sivan 5784
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To the AEC Redistribution Committee for Victoria.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the AEC draft redistribution proposal.

The North Eastern Jewish Centre (NEJC) is a vibrant religious and community centre for the Jewish people in the North Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The Centre was founded in the 1960s by Jewish families around the North Eastern suburbs, but primarily in Balwyn. Our first location was located at 14 Sevenoaks Street, Balwyn.

We moved to Doncaster in the 1970s, after we received a generous donation of 30,000 square meters of soil from the development of Doncaster Shoppingtown.

The main Jewish heartland of Melbourne always has been and continues to be Caulfield and its surrounding area. This area is well serviced by the overwhelming majority of synagogues in Melbourne. The community we service is not this community, but the community of Jews in Kew, Balwyn, Doncaster, and Templestowe. See figure 1 below.

There are three synagogues in this area, however, the Kew Hebrew Congregation is inactive and only operates occasionally and on the High Holidays (most important Jewish festival season, once a year), while the Leo Baeck centre is a "progressive" synagogue that caters only to the beliefs and traditions of a small subset of the community. As such, we are the only traditional orthodox active synagogue in the east of Melbourne. To that end, Balwyn and Kew are of the same or higher density of Jews as our other catchments of Doncaster and Templestowe and form a large portion of our membership and active members.

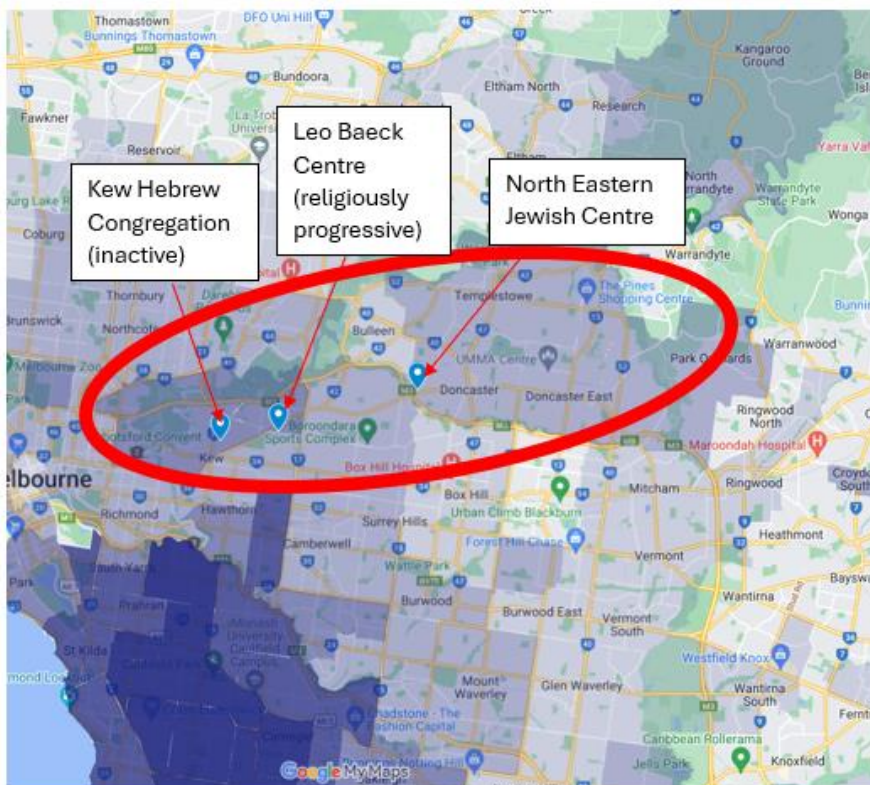


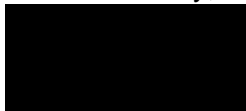
Figure 1 - A heat map of the Jewish community in Melbourne. The three blue pins are the only synagogues in Eastern Melbourne. Marked in red is our 'catchment area'.

Having a single local member is invaluable to our Shule (Synagogue) and our community. The recent surge in antisemitism has put our community under threat, and it is important that as a minority, we can have one single local member on which to rely for representation and with whom to liaise about antisemitism. The communication overheads that come with multiple state and federal members can take up a huge amount of time in a crisis.

The AEC draft boundaries have significantly altered the boundaries of Kooyong, for the first time in recent history. This presents for us an opportunity to finally have our membership and our community reunited in our home seat of Menzies.

The undersigned believes that the AEC should use this opportunity to attempt to unite Balwyn and Balwyn North with Doncaster in the seat of Menzies.

Yours sincerely,



Milton Shenker
President
North Eastern Jewish Centre