



# Objection 446

Dr Fizza Sabir and Ms Mahrukh Qureshi

2 pages

Dear Redistribution Committee,

We write to object to the proposed boundaries of the Federal Electoral Division of Wills as proposed on 31 May 2024. We write in our capacity as proud South Asian, Muslim, women (mother and daughter) who reside in Glenroy.

We oppose the removal of parts of Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick West and Glenroy from our electorate. We also oppose the addition of Brunswick East, Princes Hill, Carlton North and Fitzroy North, due to the imbalance this would create. This is based on the 'communities of interest' consideration.

Firstly, splitting Glenroy and Oak Park across the Divisions of Maribyrnong and Wills would split a community of interest in half and send some of it to an electorate where we don't have a shared community/identity. As residents of Glenroy, we live in a highly diverse community. Our neighbours and community members include those from Indian, Nepalese Pakistani, and various Arab backgrounds, including Lebanese. We feel at home here due to the diversity of our community. This shared community / community identity is evidently different to the suburbs in Maribyrnong, across the Moonee Creek border.

The businesses on the sections of Pascoe Vale Road that run through Glenroy and Oak Park, as well as those along Wheatsheaf Road, as a great example of our shared community identity. Some of these include:

On Wheatsheaf Road (Glenroy):

- Agha Juice, Glenroy (Wheatsheaf Road) – popular juice spot of Pakistani origin
- Al Basha Café – busy café serving shisha
- Mad Momos – dumpling restaurant of Nepalese origin
- Indian Essence – local Indian restaurant
- Thamel Chowk – Nepalese restaurant
- Sukunda Nepalese Cuisine – Nepalese restaurant

Along Pascoe Vale and Glenroy Roads:

- Piro – Nepalese Cuisine
- Big Bazaar – our local Indian/Pakistani, grocery store
- Saira Global – a new Indian/Pakistani apparel store
- Momo Central Glenroy – Nepalese/Indian dumpling restaurant

Along Snell Grove (Next to Oak Park Station):

- Oak Park Medical Centre – our doctors are Sri Lankan, Persian and Pakistani
- Maleko Barbershop – barber of Lebanese origin

All of the above businesses remain in the Division of Wills. Yet, the new boundary being drawn along Pascoe Vale Road, means that parts of Glenroy and Oak Park no longer share a federal electorate with these businesses. **The businesses above are where residents of Glenroy and Oak Park shop, live, work, go the gym, immerse themselves in their communities, seek medical treatment, and worship. Our local mosque is in the part of Glenroy that will remain in Wills.** Fawkner is a central hub which we visit on a regular basis for our Pakistani groceries, halal meat, and to visit several of our favourite restaurants. It makes no sense for our homes to be placed in Maribyrnong while our lives are lived in Wills.

The residents of all of these areas are diverse. The increase of South Asian/Middle Eastern populations residing in Glenroy means that as a suburb, we share more with the residents of the electorate of Wills than we do with those in Maribyrnong.

We are members of a similar community, with similar interests. We do not believe in the stereotyping or boxing in of communities along lines of ethnicity or national origin. That is not the spirit of our federal system. However, we are afraid that the interests of our diverse community will have to 'fight' for recognition at the federal level – and make us in the north feel further disenfranchised. Residents of Glenroy, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale South often have to fight to have our interests / voices heard, and we have worked so hard to set up systems and organisations in Wills and Merri-bek to ensure there is representation. If we are moved, we may be forgotten again. In contrast, our interests are well-established in Wills. We share much with the residents of Coburg North, Hadfield and Fawkner. We share little with those of Essendon, Aberfeldie, and Moonee Ponds. And, for the same reasons, we share little with the proposed additions of Fitzroy North, Carlton North and Princes Hill.

As South Asians, we share a similar culture with the burgeoning Nepalese, Indian, and Sri Lankan communities in Wills. As Muslims, we share much with the Islamic businesses along Sydney Road and the Muslim families who reside all throughout Wills.

We believe that Glenroy, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale South, and Brunswick West should remain in Wills, whilst the new additions from the electorate of Melbourne should not. The boundaries as they remain presently make sense. This is especially the case for our community of interest, a culturally and religiously diverse and growing community, which shares little with the broader electorates of Maribyrnong or Melbourne. Ultimately, as a current resident of the Division of Wills, we respectfully disagree with the changes to this federal electorate. Wills should remain as it is.

We thank you for taking the time to consider our submission.

Dr Fizza Sabir and Ms. Mahrukh Qureshi  
Residents of Glenroy (Mother & Daughter)