



# Comment on objections G€

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# **COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS FOR 2020/21 VICTORIAN REDISTRIBUTION (DR MARK MULCAIR)**

Almost all of the Objections fall into a small number of groups:

- Objections to the proposed Menzies/Deakin/Chisholm boundary through Box Hill and Blackburn
- Objections to the boundary between Higgins and Macnamara.
- Objections to the interface between Chisholm, Hotham and Bruce.
- Objections to the splitting of Hampton Park and Berwick
- Objections to the location and boundaries of Hawke.
- Objections to naming of Divisions.

I do not make any comment on the naming of Divisions; ultimately, I feel it is up to the locals to recommend possible name changes for their seat. If enough people feel strongly about their seat names being changed, the Committee should take note of this.

I do note, however, that there are several geographical-based names (Kooyong, Maribyrnong, Corio) that could be used for renaming if the Committee wished to honour other individuals, either now or at future redistributions.

## OBJECTIONS TO THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN MENZIES, DEAKIN AND CHISHOLM

One of the main points of contention at this redistribution is the proposed interface between these three Divisions, especially in the Box Hill and Blackburn areas. In particular the proposed Menzies/Deakin boundary along Whitehorse Road, which splits all of Box Hill, Blackburn, Nunawading, and Mitcham.

Generally, there are two different approaches offered to deal with this:

- 1) Transfer all or part of Box Hill and Blackburn into Deakin, with northern Ringwood and Croydon then going into Menzies.
- 2) Move the southern boundary of Menzies to Canterbury Road to unite Box Hill and Blackburn, with Mitcham and Nunawading being returned to Deakin.

Both of these options have merit.

**Option 1**, which is something very close to my original Suggestions, allows for Deakin to be clearly defined along the Maroondah Highway and Canterbury Road corridor, with Menzies established as a purely Manningham/northern Maroondah Division. This reduces the split of Whitehorse Council, while simply making a different split of Maroondah.

If this option was combined with a change to the Deakin/Chisholm boundary, it would also allow all of Box Hill, Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham to be united in a single seat, and the proposed split of Burwood East and Blackburn South would be minimized.

The main issue with this arrangement is that both Menzies and Deakin would become stretched into long, narrow, east-west aligned Divisions. This is not a problem for Deakin, as most major roads and railways run east-west in this part of Melbourne. However, it is more of an issue for Menzies, where the links between the east and west would not be as strong.

This arrangement would also result in Ringwood being split, with most proposals suggesting a boundary quite close to the Ringwood CBD. This would detach residents in Ringwood and Ringwood North from their community hub in central Ringwood. My own proposal suggested keeping most of Ringwood in Deakin, with more of the Croydon area being placed in Menzies, which might be an alternative way to address this.

If the Committee was considering this option, I would strongly recommend the proposal of Charles Richardson over the ALP. Dr Richardson allows for Box Hill and Blackburn to be united in Deakin, with more of Burwood East, Blackburn South and Vermont South placed in Chisholm. I believe, this is the best arrangement available if Option 1 is adopted.

Labor's proposal seems to me to be the worst of both worlds; it has the drawbacks of stretching Deakin and Menzies east-west, but without actually resolving the split of Box Hill and Blackburn.

**Option 2** has the advantage of leaving Menzies and Deakin as more compact Divisions, with Maroondah Council united in a single seat. This arrangement also takes advantage of the more natural communication links and communities of interest in the eastern part of both seats, with almost all of greater Ringwood and Croydon united in Deakin. The proposed LGA boundary forms a fairly clear divide between suburban Ringwood/Croydon and the more semi-rural green wedge areas to the north.

The main disadvantage is the crossing of Koonung Creek, where the north-south links are reasonable but not as strong as the east-west links. Whitehorse council would be split 3 ways, and Box Hill and Blackburn would be detached from Nunawading and Mitcham.

Again, it would make enormous sense to adjust the Chisholm/Deakin boundary as well (as suggested by myself, Charles Richardson, and others) to make greater use of Springvale Road in this area.

**Whichever of option 1 or 2 is chosen, I strongly recommend that the Committee makes use of Canterbury Road instead of Whitehorse Road as the northern boundary of Chisholm, and Springvale Road instead of Blackburn Road as the Chisholm/Deakin boundary.**

**Option 3**, of course, is to do nothing, as implied by the Liberals' submission. The boundary is 'bad', but growth patterns will likely continue to drag Menzies/Deakin southwards, so the issue may resolve itself at the next redistribution. Perhaps a 'bad' boundary could be accepted for one cycle if it is likely to be undone next time.

## OBJECTIONS TO THE BOUNDARIES OF MACNAMARA AND HIGGINS

The other main set of Objections is to the boundary between Macnamara and Higgins. In particular, the concern that the proposed boundary along Williams Road and Hotham Street will split the Jewish community; with Ripponlea, Balaclava, and parts of St Kilda East isolated from the Caulfield area.

Firstly, it should be noted that virtually all of the original Suggestions (including the Liberals, Greens, and independent proposals) were supportive of this change. The ALP was one of the only holdouts for retaining the existing arrangement.

Secondly, while there is obviously a community of interest between St Kilda, Elsternwick, Balaclava, Ripponlea, and Caulfield:

### *1. The Jewish community is already split by the existing boundaries*

While it is true that a significant part of the Jewish community is concentrated around Caulfield and Elsternwick, both of these areas are currently split between Macnamara and Goldstein. In fact, at least one of the Objections notes the frustration with the existing boundary along Glenhuntly Road, splitting Caulfield South off from Caulfield itself.

Some of the Objections claim that the Jewish community is ‘concentrated’ in Macnamara, with a total % of people identifying as Jewish of just under 10%. However Goldstein (around 6.5%) and Higgins (3.5 – 4%) also have significant communities present within them.

In some ways, it seems that the southern boundary with Goldstein is an ever greater divide than the proposed boundary with Higgins

### *2. The western part of Higgins already contains suburbs with strong Jewish presence*

Significant Jewish communities are already present in the existing Higgins suburbs such as Toorak (9.3%), Armadale (5.9%), Malvern (6.0%), and Kooyong (4.4%). These are all substantially greater than St Kilda or Elwood, which some other Objections seek to hold up as ‘significant’. If anything, this emphasises that Caulfield would have a greater affinity with these suburbs than with St Kilda and other parts of Macnamara.

Leaving religious affiliation aside, I would also argue that these suburbs would have a much greater affinity and similarity to Caulfield socio-demographically (relatively affluent suburban areas) than the very socially mixed population of St Kilda.

While Dandenong Road is a significant artery in this area, it does not seem to be the impenetrable cultural divide that some other Objections are claiming.

### 3. *Caulfield has previously been within Higgins*

For several decades, Caulfield and surrounds were included in Higgins. It was only in the 1989 redistribution that the Division adopted something like its existing boundaries. Prior to this, the boundaries of Higgins were actually quite similar to those proposed by the Committee (Caulfield included, South Yarra and Prahran removed). So there is plenty of precedent for this arrangement of boundaries.

### *City of Stonnington*

The ALP also notes that the proposed boundaries split the City of Stonnington. However, in my opinion, this is a municipality of two distinct parts that would be better separated: the high-density and commercial precinct in the west versus the more residential and suburban communities in the east. The proposed boundary along Williams Road defines the boundary between these two halves fairly well.

On the argument of dividing municipalities, the proposed boundaries reduce the split of Glen Eira council, with all of Macnamara's share of the LGA removed and placed in Higgins.

## **OPTIONS FOR CHANGE**

I do not support returning to the previous boundaries (or similar) for Macnamara and Higgins. In my opinion, the proposed boundaries are a significant improvement over the existing ones: they define Macnamara and Higgins as inner city and suburban Divisions respectively, in contrast to the current arrangement where both are hybrid seats.

I believe Prahran and South Yarra fit better with St Kilda, South Melbourne, and the high-density communities close to the CBD than they do with the existing Higgins. Similarly, I feel the suburban nature of Caulfield and Elsternwick have a greater synergy with the western part of Higgins than with the remainder of Macnamara.

In an ideal world, this change would be extremely uncontroversial. The one issue is the potential splitting of the Jewish community. Assuming the proposed boundaries are not completely reversed, I see three possible options here.

### **Option 1: No change**

One option is to simply accept the proposed boundaries as they are. The Williams Road/Hotham Street corridor constitutes a very logical and regular eastern boundary for Macnamara, and also defines fairly well the boundary between inner city and suburban areas in this part of Melbourne.

This leaves the Jewish community split, but as I have noted, the existing boundaries divide this community anyway. With expected growth in the inner city going forward, it will probably be possible to unite Balaclava and Ripponlea with the remainder of Higgins at the next redistribution. Perhaps a less-than-perfect arrangement can be accepted for the short-term, if there is the expectation that it could be rectified in the near future.

### **Option 2: Minor change**

If it was truly felt that the Jewish community of interest was strong enough to justify altering the boundaries, there is one simple adjustment that I would propose:

- Transfer the balance of Prahran into Macnamara, by following Orrong Road instead of Williams Road, south of Malvern Road.
- Transfer Balaclava and Ripponlea into Higgins, using Inkerman Street and Chapel Street as the new boundary in this area.

This would address those Objections to splitting Ripponlea/Balaclava from Caulfield, and would transfer virtually all of Macnamara's remaining Jewish community into Higgins. Each change would involve around 4500 – 5000 electors, so would balance out fairly well.

The downside is that the eastern boundary of Macnamara would become less regular, but a number of Objections argue strongly that community of interest should outweigh 'regularity' in this area.

Dr Charles Richardson in his Objection 17 has proposed a different minor change, aligning to the LGA boundary south of Dandenong Road. However, I think this would raise even more Objections by further splitting St Kilda East.

### **Option 3: Significant change**

A third option is to make a more significant series of adjustments between Higgins, Goldstein, and Hotham. This would address a number of other Objections and general comments that have been raised at this redistribution, such as:

- Caulfield and Elsternwick being split between Divisions.
- Bentleigh East being an increasingly poor fit in Hotham.
- Hughesdale being split from Carnegie and Murrumbeena.

This change could involve:

#### ***1) Unite all of Caulfield and Elsternwick in Higgins***

I would suggest running the boundary along Nepean Highway and North Road. This would allow for virtually all of the Jewish community to be united in Higgins (especially if the change in Option 2 was also made), as well as helping to unite all of the greater Caulfield

area in a single seat. North Road would be a very strong and clear boundary in the area; arguably, much clearer than Glenhuntly Road.

**2) *Transfer all of Bentleigh East to Goldstein***

This would allow the use of the very strong eastern boundary of Warrigal Road. A number of comments have noted that, with the loss of neighbouring suburbs along the Frankston rail line, Bentleigh East no longer fits well in Hotham. It seems sensible to me to unite Bentleigh East with Bentleigh itself, and similar suburbs immediately to the west, if at all possible.

**3) *Transfer all of Carnegie and Murrumbeena to Hotham***

This addresses those Objections to splitting these two suburbs from Hughesdale. The Dandenong railway line would provide a very strong link back to Oakleigh, which is the main focal point of western Hotham.

This change could also be adopted in conjunction with Option 2, to allow all of Caulfield, Elsternwick, Balaclava, Ripponlea, and almost all of St Kilda East to be united in the same seat. This would comprehensively address the issues raised by the Jewish community.

While this involve a churn of around 20,000 electors on all sides, I feel this could be a way to address a significant number of different Objections in one hit.



## **OBJECTIONS TO THE BOUNDARIES OF CHISHOLM, HOTHAM AND BRUCE**

A number of Objections, including my own, suggest adopting Ferntree Gully Road and Monash Freeway as the new southern boundary for Chisholm. I strongly support this, as it has the following benefits:

- All of Clayton and almost all of Oakleigh can be united in Hotham. The proposed boundary splits the northern parts of these suburbs off from their community of interest in Hotham.
- Mulgrave has a neater split along Monash Freeway, which has long served as a clear divide in this part of Melbourne.
- Bruce no longer needs to intrude into Monash Council, and the LGA boundary along Police Road can be adopted as its new northern boundary.
- The Bruce/Hotham boundary can be straightened.

These changes leave Chisholm as a clear 'Waverley' based seat, Hotham more focussed on Oakleigh/Clayton/Springvale, and Bruce as a completely south-eastern Dandenong/Casey Division.

## **OBJECTIONS TO THE BOUNDARIES OF BRUCE, HOLT AND LATROBE**

There are a number of issues identified with the proposed boundaries:

- The proposed southern boundary of Bruce, which splits Hampton Park
- The proposed Bruce/Latrobe boundary that runs through the middle of central Berwick
- The proposed transfer of Tooradin and eastern Clyde to Latrobe; in particular splitting Tooradin off from other Westernport towns currently in Holt.

I propose a slight clockwise rotation of all 3 seats, to (a) unite central Berwick in Bruce, (b) re-unite Hampton Park in Holt, and (c) transfer the remaining rural parts of Holt into Latrobe.

What is interesting is that most other Objections propose the exact opposite: making a more southerly split of Hampton Park, returning Tooradin to Holt, and placing the eastern part of Berwick back in Latrobe. This proposal is perfectly workable numerically, but it would require a further split of both Berwick and Hampton Park, which I think should be avoided.

I still believe my proposal makes enormous sense. However, if the second option was taken, I would probably prefer the Liberals' proposal. If Berwick and Hampton Park must be divided, then I think the Liberals do a better job of it than some of the other arrangements (including the Committee's proposal).

## OBJECTIONS TO THE BOUNDARIES OF HAWKE

A few submissions Object to the inclusion of Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, and/or other parts of Moorabool Shire into the proposed new Division of Hawke. The objectors feel that rural and semi-rural areas do not naturally fit in an ‘urban’ Melton/Sunbury based seat.

I have some sympathy with areas on the urban-rural fringe that appear to always be ‘the final piece of the puzzle’ at redistributions, and often shift around between different seats. However, I think Bacchus Marsh in particular is more of a satellite community of Melbourne than a rural town, and fits better in an outer suburban seat than a Ballarat one. Areas such as Bacchus Marsh, Melton, and Sunbury all share similar concerns of outer urban and semi-rural regions, in particular infrastructure provision and access to the city. I think the community of interest through Hawke would be reasonably strong.

A couple of Objections recommend confining Hawke to the Western Highway corridor; my Objection 6 would help include areas around Rockbank and Mount Cottrell, and remove Hillside, to partially meet this suggestion.

## CHARLES RICHARDSON OBJECTIONS

Dr Richardson has been an independent contributor to redistributions for many years, and his Objections are worth examining in detail.

I have discussed his objections to Menzies/Deakin and Macnamara/Higgins above, but some of the other Objections include:

### *Objection 1: Point Cook*

I strongly support the suggestion to unite all of Point Cook in the Division of Gellibrand (as noted in my own Objection 5).

### *Objection 2: Yarraville*

Dr Richardson has identified the anomaly in the boundary here, and has proposed to place Yarraville in Gellibrand (in contrast to my Objection 5 which places most of Yarraville in Fraser).

Either option seems to work numerically, but I think Yarraville has a stronger community of interest with Seddon and Footscray (in Fraser). However, I would have no issue with uniting the suburb in Gellibrand.

### *Objection 3 and 4: Corio and Tucker*

In principle, I strongly support the return of the Corio/Tucker boundary to the Barwon River, uniting Highton and Belmont back into a southern Geelong Division. I also have no problem with Leopold being placed in Corio; it forms something of a transition between metropolitan Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula, so would fit well in either seat.

However, the problem is that Clifton Springs and Drysdale must also be transferred to make the numbers balance, and this splits the Peninsula. I think it makes more sense to leave the Bellarine towns united in a single seat, even if it means a suboptimal boundary through Geelong.

I have investigated alternatives with Bannockburn switching to Corio (which would supersede Charles' Objection 3), but the numbers don't balance.

Assuming no major changes to Corio, I am inclined to agree with Charles' Objection 3, and offer my own Objection 8 as a way to also unite the built-up parts of Moolap in Corio.

### *Objections 5, 6, 7: Western Victoria*

These changes result in a number of LGAs being split, although it is clear from examples such as Skipton that these do not always perfectly represent community of interest in this area. I have no issue with these changes provided the locals do not object.

### *Objection 9: North-eastern Melbourne*

I support these changes, which mirror my own Objection 7. While I proposed a part of Greensborough be transferred from Jagajaga to McEwen, the alternative of placing Kangaroo Ground and Research (both more rural than most of Jagajaga) is also very sensible.

### *Objection 10 and 11: North/Eastern Victoria*

These two small changes seem reasonable to me, provided the locals are happy with them.

I note that Dr Richardson's proposed Kinglake change does deviate from the LGA boundary, placing a small part of Murrindindi in McEwen. However, the boundary here runs very close to Kinglake township, so this may be another case of LGA boundaries not quite capturing community of interest in this area.

### *Objections 12-14: Bruce, Holt and Latrobe*

As noted, I think the Liberals' proposed arrangement, which goes a little further than Dr Richardson's, would be a better outcome in this area if an option like this was being considered.

### *Objection 15: Emerald and Macclesfield*

Re-aligning to the LGA boundary makes sense, provided it does not push Latrobe's numbers over the maximum. This may depend on which arrangement for Bruce, Holt, and Latrobe the Committee eventually settles on.

## ALP OBJECTIONS

Labor has also offered their own comments on the major changes discussed above (their Objections 1, 2, 4 and 5). Over half of their submission is devoted to their desire to overturn the proposed Higgins/Macnamara boundary. As noted above, I do not support this.

### *Objection 3: Tucker/Wannon*

Labor proposes that Anglesea be placed in Tucker, with rural communities immediately west of Geelong being placed in Wannon.

While there may be good links between Anglesea and Geelong, I don't agree with these changes. The semi-rural communities such as Moriac have stronger links to Geelong, and all are geographically closer to Geelong than Anglesea is. For example, Moriac/Mount Moriac is only 15 – 20 km from Geelong, and serves as something of a satellite commuter town for the city.

In my opinion, Anglesea is a better fit with Lorne, Aireys Inlet, and other Great Ocean Road communities currently in Wannon, than with the 'commuter belt' towns proposed to be in Tucker.

Labor's changes would also seem to create a contorted boundary in this area, with Tucker extending as a long narrow 'tail' to include Anglesea, while excluding areas between Anglesea and Geelong.

### *Objection 6: Surrey Hills*

Uniting Surrey Hills in Kooyong was something I proposed in my original Suggestions, but the Committee's arrangement in this area is slightly different to my proposals.

Ideally, uniting Surrey Hills would make sense, although this now may depend on the Committee's final arrangement for Chisholm, Deakin, Menzies, and Kooyong.

### *Objection 7: Maribyrnong*

This proposal does provide a way to link the two halves of the proposed Maribyrnong, which is something similar to my original Suggestions. However, I recommended all of Maribyrnong be transferred, whereas Labor only transfers a small portion of Maribyrnong north of Raleigh Road. This appears to be a numbers problem, since the entire suburb cannot be transferred without making significant changes elsewhere. The issue is that this splits the northern part of Maribyrnong off from Highpoint shopping centre and the surrounding community hub. I think this is undesirable, and outweighs the benefits of this change.

If the entire suburb of Maribyrnong cannot be transferred, I would prefer the Committee's proposed boundaries over Labor's proposed change.

## LIBERAL PARTY OBJECTIONS

The Liberals generally propose only minor adjustments, with an apparent aim of securing a ‘minimal change’ outcome. Some of these make sense, since the numbers involved are small, but I think a couple of their desires (Chisholm/Deakin/Hotham) would be better accomplished by more substantial change.

### *Wannon/Mallee: Stawell and Halls Gap*

I have no problem with this arrangement in principle; Stawell has shifted around between Mallee and Wannon multiple times over the years, and the Lexton area would seem to have good links with Avoca and other communities along the Sunraysia Highway.

The only potential issue would be that Avoca and Lexton would become a bit of a ‘tail’ on the existing Mallee, and the boundary would be brought quite close to Ballarat.

### *Deakin/Chisholm: Burwood East*

This arrangement would leave the boundary running along minor streets such as Hawthorn Road and Mahoneys Road, which are less clear than either Springvale Road or Blackburn Road in this area.

If the proposal of myself and others to return this entire area to Chisholm was adopted, this Objection would be superseded, and the stronger boundary of Springvale Road could be adopted.

### *Chisholm/Hotham: Oakleigh East*

While I agree that Oakleigh should be re-united as much as possible in Hotham, I don’t agree with the Liberals’ proposed boundaries. Again, I think a more substantial change would be a better outcome here.

Again, a number of Objections including my own have suggested an arrangement to unite Clayton as well as Oakleigh in Hotham, and to transfer the parts of Mulgrave in Bruce into Chisholm. Ferntree Gully Road and Monash Freeway are strong boundaries and divides in the area, and this more significant change would address a number of related issues at the same time.

### *Gellibrand/Fraser: Yarraville*

The Liberals have proposed that Stony Creek be used as the new boundary between these two seats, which seems a workable alternative to Francis Street or Sommerville Road in this area.

*Calwell/Maribyrnong: Westmeadows*

I agree with the proposal to transfer the western part of Westmeadows to Maribyrnong. This area appears to be somewhat isolated from the rest of Calwell, and would probably have stronger connections to the south and east.

*Melbourne/Wills: Brunswick East*

I agree in principle to leave the existing boundary unchanged (which was my original Suggestion), with the only note being that Wills would be placed at the top of tolerance by retaining this area.