



Comment on objections 48

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Australian Electoral Commission
Victorian Redistribution Secretariat

Re: My Objections and comments on the Liberal Party's submission on AEC Proposed
Redistribution of Federal Electorates in Victoria

Liberal Party objections to Federal Division changes from Corangamite to Cox

Five Points (in quotation marks) taken from the Liberal Party submission to the AEC
"Proposed Redistribution of Victoria from the Liberal Party of Australia -(Victorian Division)"

Objections to Renaming Corangamite to Cox

1. "(there is a) need to hold a public inquiry into the objections to the Redistribution Committee's proposed boundaries, to ensure the communities in the existing Division of Corangamite have sufficient opportunity to make submissions in person to the inquiry."

Why? There are many electorates to change; Divisions of Batman, Casey, Chisholm, Deakin, Fraser (the New Division), Gellibrand, Gippsland, Goldstein, Gorton, Higgins, Hotham, Indi, Jagajaga, Kooyong, Lalor, Macnamara, Maribyrnong, McEwen, Melbourne, Menzies, Monash, Scullin, and Wills.

Are each to have a local opportunity to put submissions in person with its resultant high costs in staff, accommodation, compilation, reporting etc? There is ample opportunity for written and online submissions to the AEC without restraint.

This is not a reason to leave boundaries where they are at present.

2. The Liberal Party objects to the proposed renaming of the Division of Corangamite.

"The Redistribution Committee observed that the existing name of the Division of Corangamite:

(a) - is that of an original federation electoral division,

(b) - is an Aboriginal name, and

(c)- is a geographical feature, although this geographical feature no longer retains a connection to the proposed

electoral division.”

(d)- “the Redistribution Committee should further consider the dignity and status of the office of a Member of the House of Representatives when selecting a name for a division to ensure the name does not inadvertently invite ridicule or inappropriate connotations in the course of a Member's discharge of duties.”

(a) An original Federal electoral division name should be retained only because it was original?

The Liberal Party are happy to support other “original names” such as Macnamara (existing Division of Melbourne Ports) Monash (existing Division of McMillan). This is especially so with the name change involving a new division in honour of the Rt Hon John Malcolm Fraser AC CH and to rename a division in honour of Sir John Monash CB(M) KCB(M) GCMG. 20 Coalition MP's have joined a group warning against the “demonisation of coal. The group is named after Sir John Monash, owing to his role in opening up the LaTrobe Valley for coal production. Where is the argument for retaining original names of electorates? This is inconsistency at best, hypocrisy at worst.

(b) Corangamite is an aboriginal name and should be retained for that reason.

This logic means that only non-aboriginal names for electorates can be changed without any other considerations, ignores the fact that there are divisions right across Australia that are named for geographic features or regions, including in the case of the majority of the electorates with Aboriginal names. “Corangamite” is the name of a lake that will no longer be within the boundaries of the seat, enough reason right there to change the name to Cox.

(c) Lake Corangamite “no longer retains a connection to the proposed electoral division.”

Answers its own question. If the feature is no longer in the electorate the electorate name needs to change to reflect the location of its constituents.

(d) How is the name Cox open to ridicule except for teenage boys?

The Redistribution Committee considers 'Cox' to be an appropriate name for an electoral division focused on Victoria's Surf Coast, due to May Cox's contributions to teaching swimming and lifesaving and her strong connections to Queenscliff. Perhaps its Australian egalitarian society that sees swimming instruction pioneers as important to society as Prime Ministers (Seat of Fraser) and Generals (seat of Monash).

Apart from a surname the word Cox is also short for coxswain - a helmsman (first used in 1869), Cox -1 is an enzyme etc. One wonders what people with the name Cox and the family of May Cox think of this purile suggestion of inappropriate connotations.

The name of a Federal Division is usually long standing and of some significance to the region and its electors. Care must be taken to choose wisely and May Cox ticks all the boxes, historically significant as the first teacher of Water Safety and Surf Life Saving,

Her activity resulted in the saving of thousands of Victorian coastal lives and the building of communities. The Federal Division (Cox) has some of the most visited beaches in Australia.

Proposed Boundaries of the Division of Cox

The enrolment in the existing Division of Corangamite is projected to exceed the maximum number of electors permitted under s66(3)(a) of the Electoral Act and that a reduction of electors is required or the electoral division to fall within the permitted range of the number of electors in an electoral division.

3. (a) “The proposed boundaries significantly worsen the communities of interest in urban south Geelong by further isolating and disconnecting Waurm Ponds and Grovedale from the remainder of urban Geelong by transferring Highton, Belmont, and Wandana Heights to the Division of Corio.

(b) the Commission should ensure that the communities of urban Geelong are sufficiently represented in the Divisions of Corio and Cox/Corangamite so that they have ample and equal weight in their representation in the Australian Parliament.”

(a) There is no evidence that the communities of Waurm Ponds and Grovedale are “isolated and disconnected “ from urban Geelong. Furthermore the business communities are already part of the Surf Coast hinterland and a point of retail contact with residents of the Surf Coast. Whereas Highton, Belmont and Wandana Heights are suburbs with physical and social links with urban Geelong.

(b) This is a specious argument considering that all electors have “ample and equal weight in their representation”. In fact this is one of the reasons for the realignment of the boundaries to ensure that all members of an electorate have “ample and equal weight” in their representation in the Australian Parliament. Boundaries are defined by the size of the population contained therein, so ipso facto there is equal representation between electorates.

4. “The Liberal Party objects to the transfer of the northern part of the Colac Otway Shire from Corangamite to Wannon. The proposed boundary separates the communities of Birregurra, Yeodene, Gellibrand, Forrest, Barwon Downs, and Carlisle River, among many other neighbouring towns from their major commercial, administrative, social, and community centre in Colac.

The Electoral Act demands that a reduction of electors is required for a large electoral division to fall within the permitted range of the number of electors in an electoral division. This concept is based on a metric of voters, not how far they live from an urban centre. Electoral boundaries do not restrict voters from access to “major commercial, administrative, social, and community centres”; Electorate boundaries do not create “geographical isolation” it is an administrative purpose to equalise the number of voters in each division.

5. "While the proposed Division of Cox has the character of dispersed communities along the Victorian coast, it lacks a major commercial, government, and administrative centre within its boundaries and positions the major commercial, government, and administrative centres of the existing Division of Corangamite just outside its boundaries."

While this logic would require a wholesale realignment of Federal Divisions Australia wide, to reflect their "closeness" to major administrative centres, which is beyond the scope of this realignment exercise. There are many examples of electorates "just outside" major centres; are we to realign boundaries by geography and ignore population?

I thank the Redistribution Committee for the opportunity to challenge the assumptions by the Liberal Party on the proposed Federal District boundary changes.



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