



Comment on suggestion 45

Colac Otway Shire

8 pages

From: Tamzin McLennan
To: [FedRedistribution - VIC](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
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Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[171129 Letter from Mayor Joe McCracken regarding proposed Victorian federal electoral boundary review.DOCX](#)

Good afternoon,

On behalf of Cr Joe McCracken, Mayor of the Colac Otway Shire Council, please find attached a submission into the proposed Victorian federal election boundary review.

Regards,

Tamzin

Tamzin McLennan

Communications Coordinator

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30 November, 2017

**Redistribution Committee for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
Level 1
Urban Workshop
50 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000**

Dear members of the redistribution committee

RE: Submission from Colac Otway Shire Mayor (on behalf of councillors) regarding the federal seat of Corangamite

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission into what is an extremely important process of redefining the federal electoral boundaries.

Colac Otway Shire has been in the Corangamite electorate for all of its living history, and that's something we hope will not change. Corangamite, a federation seat, was named after Lake Corangamite, whose shores lap the Colac Otway Shire boundaries. Much like the Lake Corangamite, the federal electorate of Corangamite is an important part of our identity as a community. Corangamite has always been a seat that has had a rich diversity of farming to its west, the surf coast to the south, the rocky plains of the north, and the urban sprawl of the east. It would be extremely unfortunate to deconstruct this situation.

Under the criteria for boundary changes, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) have listed the following:

- Community interests within the proposed electoral division, including economic, social and regional interests
- Means of communication and travel within the proposed electoral division
- Physical features and area of the proposed electoral division, and
- Existing boundaries of divisions in the state or territory.

I will address each criteria on pages to follow.



1: Community of interest

1A) Population

It is undoubtedly clear that Colac's population boom is on the horizon. Currently Colac has a population of 12,337 and the Colac Otway Shire has a population of 21,359. With the completion of a dual-laneway road along the Princes Highway, it is clear that Colac's population will increase in years to come.

As the highway duplication has reached Winchelsea we have seen evidence of the incredible growth a dual highway can bring. The growth in Winchelsea is remarkable. New houses are being constructed, which will then require services such as businesses, schools, medical facilities and the like. Colac too will reap the benefits of a close proximity to Geelong, made even more accessible by the soon to be completed dual highway.

Colac Otway is taking charge of its own destiny. We know that growth will come soon. That's why we're in the process of preparing strategies to consider how and where Colac's population can grow to 20,000 by the year 2050. This is a once-in-a-generation piece of work that will lead to significant growth within the Colac township area. We are sending the signal out that Colac is prepared to take its fair share of that growth, and once the highway duplication has been completed, we expect growth to increase significantly.

1B) Economy

It is fair to say that Colac Otway is a diverse economy.

Our farmers are world renowned for growing some of the finest produce in the country. Many of the farmers in our shire use the highway leading to Geelong, and the port facilities in Geelong, to transport their goods all across the globe. This has resulted in Colac farmers being iconic producers of milk, beef and lamb. This creates a very tangible business link along the centre of the federal electorate of Corangamite. It has also been reported in the media (please see attachment) that the Geelong saleyards are closing, and that users of the saleyards are being asked to consider using the saleyard facilities in Colac. Again, this is another tangible link that connects us to the Geelong region and the greater Corangamite electorate.

Our industry is also extremely well connected with the Geelong region. In Colac we have three large employers; AKD Softwoods (AKD), Australian Lamb Company (ALC) and Bulla Dairy Foods (Bulla). These local businesses alone contribute enormously to our economy, collectively employing 1281 locals, providing incomes and ongoing training opportunities, whilst also exporting renowned products globally.





AKD, ALC and Bulla are all serviced by our soon to be completed dual-lane highway, leading the Geelong and Melbourne ports. It cannot be over-stated enough, the economic links we have with the Corangamite region and the importance of these links to the continued development of our major industries.

Tourism is also a key industry for our coastal regions. Again, day trippers and extended stay tourists enter our region from Geelong and Melbourne using the dual-lane highway. They come to experience our wonderful environment, our clean green eateries, and of course they come to see the iconic Great Ocean Road. The Great Ocean Road is a pivotal aspect to our local economy, and its length meanders right up the spine of the Corangamite electorate. The Great Ocean Road is a physical, tangible tourism connection, linking Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek, Wye River and Separation Creek all the way to Torquay and beyond. The Great Ocean Road has 7.2 million visitors each year, and is an iconic part of both the Corangamite electorate and the Colac Otway Shire. Regionally, we have been successful in securing \$103 million which has helped fund vital works along the Great Ocean Road. This has been pivotal in supporting local businesses and traders as they cater to the growing tourism industry. Removing Colac Otway from Corangamite would effectively cut off our ties with other prominent parts of the Great Ocean Road such as Lorne and Torquay, making it more difficult to conduct regional advocacy.

It is demonstrably clear that Colac Otway's economic interest, and indeed its economic future, is in the booming Geelong region, as opposed to any other region.

1C) Social

Socially, Colac Otway takes its lead very much from the Geelong region. Our education connections are with Deakin University in Geelong, where many students from Colac Otway pursue their higher education dreams whilst still being able to come home to visit family and friends. This is a positive because whilst many students might live in Geelong, their electoral enrolment doesn't change. This can result in a greater participation in our democracy and encourages younger people to be actively engaged. Leaving Colac Otway in Corangamite also means that students that do move to Geelong for higher education purposes (most of whom live close to the University) don't need to go through the process of changing their enrolment information – lessening the burden on the AEC and also the families involved.

Many of our residents compete in a number of significant regional events. The Great Ocean Road Marathon for example is an event which fuses the townships along the Great Ocean Road into a marvellous hospitality experience. In 2017 the Great Ocean Road Marathon had 7000 participants. The Birregurra Festival and Art Show is another fantastic event that many people in Colac Otway, Surf Coast and Geelong attend, it attracted over 16,000 in 2017 – binding us together as a Corangamite community. These are just two examples of the many events that the Corangamite region offers, and to split this up unnecessarily would be a great shame.





1D) Regional

Our regional interests are clearly with the Geelong area. Colac Otway is an active member of the G21 region alliance, a collection of five councils (City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast, Borough of Queenscliff, Golden Plains and Colac Otway) all being able to advocate and push for regional issues in a very meaningful and powerful way. The G21 regional partnership includes all the area in the Corangamite electorate.

- Some of the outcomes of the G21 advocacy are:

The G21 GROW project, which tackles entrenched regional, social and economic disadvantage across the region.

- A raft of improvements to rail services creating better connections between Colac and Geelong, including \$100 million committed in 2017-18 state budget for track and signals upgrades allowing additional passenger services to Warrnambool through Geelong and Colac.
- A federal and state government commitment of \$25 million each for further upgrades to the Great Ocean Road (promised in June and November 2016).
- A further \$53 million State Government commitment for ongoing works on the Great Ocean Road beginning early 2017, specifically for resurfacing, stabilisation, signage and traffic management technology improvements.

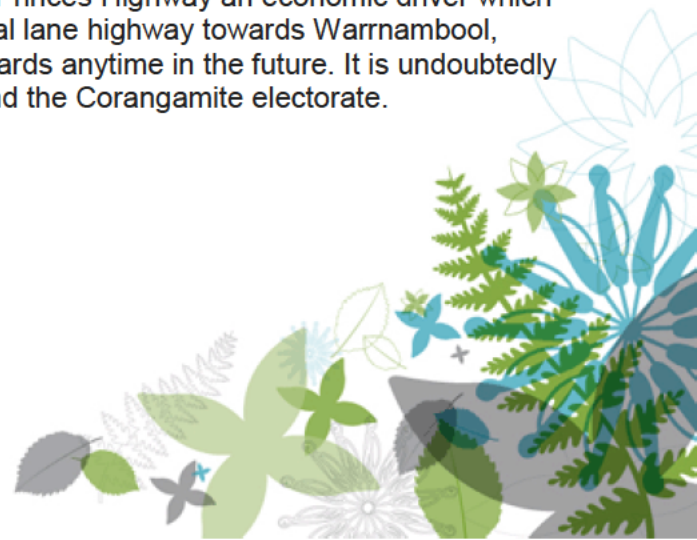
If Colac Otway is removed for the Corangamite electorate, it would significantly weaken the regional partnerships that have been formed, and this would be to the detriment of the locals within the Colac Otway Shire.

2: Means of communication and transport

Colac Otway has clear transport links with Geelong, and by extension the greater Corangamite electorate.

2A) Roads

We're proud to have been successful in lobbying federal and state governments to fund the duplication of the Princes highway costing \$171 million from Geelong to Winchelsea, and another \$363 million from Winchelsea to Colac. This will ease travel times by up to 20 minutes along the almost 70km journey. This makes Colac well within 'commutable' distance to Geelong, making Colac Otway a natural growth area in the future. This makes the soon to be completed dual lane Princes Highway an economic driver which will undoubtedly spur growth into the future. There is no dual lane highway towards Warrnambool, Ballarat or Hamilton, and this doesn't appear to be on the cards anytime in the future. It is undoubtedly clear that our transport links are with the Geelong region and the Corangamite electorate.



2B) Train

Colac Otway has been extremely successful in lobbying for extra train services. In the last state budget \$100 million was allocated to track upgrades which will directly benefit Colac Otway. This has been a result of hard campaigning and advocacy. The whole purpose of the track upgrades was to ensure that more people could have greater access to facilities and services in the Geelong and Melbourne region. The purpose of this was not to ensure our populations can get to Warrnambool or Hamilton on time. There is little demand for any train services of this nature.

Many of our aged residents cannot drive, and they use train services to attend medical appointments in Geelong or Melbourne. Many of our students use the train system to attend university whilst living at home. Many of our residents travel to Geelong to socialise, shop and conduct business. It is absolutely clear that our train links are with Geelong and by extension, the Corangamite electorate.

2C) Air

Although Colac Otway only has two relatively small municipal airstrips, it is the regional approach which most greatly benefits Colac Otway. The introduction of Avalon airport at Little River near Geelong has greatly opened up the tourism potential for our shire. This allows tourists much easier access to our region, and also allows residents in Colac Otway much quicker and easier flight options to travel interstate. The Avalon airport continues to be an economic driver for the region, and its impact will only become larger as the population continues to grow in the region.

Although Avalon airport is not in Corangamite, it does demonstrate that Colac Otway has an interest in the airport that is within the greater Geelong region, and as the federal electorate of Corangamite takes in a significant element of the Geelong region, our interests are aligned quite strongly.

3: Physical features

Although Lake Corangamite isn't within the federal electorate of Corangamite, its shores form part of the boundary of the north-west section of the electorate. This is a similar scenario for Colac Otway Shire. Removing Colac Otway Shire from the federal electorate of Corangamite effectively removes the physical, tangible connection that the federal electorate of Corangamite has with its original federation name.

It would be completely odd for the federal seat of Mallee to have no connection with the Mallee district. Similarly, it would be quite strange for the federal seat of Gippsland to have absolutely no connection with the land it was named after. This too is the same case for Corangamite – if boundaries are changed and exclude the shores of Lake Corangamite, this would completely defeat the purpose of naming the electorate 'Corangamite'.

In fact, the committee should give consideration to having Lake Corangamite being included within electoral boundaries of the federal electorate of Corangamite. This would have minimal impact on the population of the electorate, but it would pay homage to the fact that a federation seat such as Corangamite is true to original geography and history.



4. Existing boundaries

The existing boundaries of the Colac Otway Shire reside completely within the federal electorate of Corangamite. This is an ideal situation, because it allows one federal member to be entirely responsible for the Colac Otway Shire area in the federal parliament. This is a positive because it means that Colac Otway has one single point of contact for a member in the House of Representatives, meaning that communication channels are clear, simple and unambiguous.

It also means that if a constituent did have an issue they wished to raise with their federal member, the trip to Waurin Ponds is under an hour and is most likely to reduce even further once the duplication works on the Princes Highway are complete.

If Colac Otway Shire were shifted into another electorate, namely the federal electorate of Wannon, it can take up to 80-90 minutes travel time to Warrnambool, and even longer to reach Hamilton. Warrnambool and Hamilton are the two electorate offices that exist in the Wannon electorate. This would place the residents of Colac Otway Shire at a disadvantage because it limits the accessibility to our democratically elected representative.

Comments on other submissions

I won't comment on any of the submissions directly, as local government is neutral on party political matters. However, I make the following comments as general statements relating to all submissions.

- It would cause great difficulty if Colac Otway Shire is split between two separate federal electorates. It is vitally important that as a shire community, we remain together in one electorate, that being the Corangamite electorate.
- Colac's economic growth is geared towards the Geelong region. Although we may have some interests that are west of Colac Otway, the majority of our economic growth will be from the Geelong region. Staying in Corangamite is a recognition of this fact.
- It is clear that Colac Otway's community of interest overwhelmingly aligns with remaining in the federal electorate of Corangamite, on the grounds of economy, population and social interests.
- The soon to be completed duplication of the Princes Highway will lead to an increase in population within the Colac Otway Shire. We can expect steady growth in the future, and this will counter-balance the growth in other parts of the Corangamite electorate.
- Submissions should give consideration to creating a new seat within the Geelong region. This new seat would be needed to take into account of the population growth around the greater Geelong region, including Lara, Armstrong Creek, Fyansford, North Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula.
- The Great Ocean Road plays a pivotal role not just in Colac Otway, but within the entire Geelong region. Apart from being a tourism drawcard, it is also a great historical memorial that has a special place in Australia's history. It is important to keep the great ocean road link alive by ensuring that the majority of it stays in Corangamite.



I thank the committee for its consideration of my submission. If you would like to contact me for further discussions then please feel free to do so on [REDACTED] or via e-mail [REDACTED]

Kind Regards



Cr Joe McCracken
Mayor, Colac Otway Shire

