



Comment on suggestion 55

Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division)

9 pages

1 December 2017

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

Dear Committee Members,

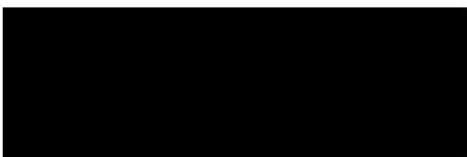
Comments on Suggestions from the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division)

The Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on suggestions received by the Redistribution Committee for Victoria regarding the proposed redistribution of Federal Electorate boundaries in Victoria.

Please find enclosed the written comments on public suggestions from the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division).

The Liberal Party is able to provide additional information should your committee consider it necessary.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Demiris
State Director

Comments on Suggestions Victorian Federal Redistribution

Division Names

A number of suggestions to the Redistribution Committee for Victoria considered the renaming of divisions. In our suggestion to the Committee, the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) chose not to make such suggestions and limited our submissions to matters concerning the alignment of electoral boundaries. As these matters have now been raised by numerous interested parties, it is appropriate to comment on them.

A significant number of submissions advocated for the renaming of the division of Melbourne Ports to Monash. The Liberal Party suggests that the Redistribution Committee give strong consideration to these persuasive submissions. Sir John Monash is regarded by many as one of the greatest Australians to ever live. Given his strong links to the division such as his birth in Dudley Street in West Melbourne and burial in Brighton General Cemetery (both of which were in Melbourne Ports before previous redistributions), his involvement and design of the Shrine of Remembrance and his design of the Princes Bridge, it is appropriate that Melbourne Ports should be renamed Monash.

In our suggestion to the Redistribution Committee, the Liberal Party proposed that the division of Murray be abolished and reconstituted in the outer north-western metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne, covering the northern part of the City of Hume. For the avoidance of doubt, we do not suggest this reconstituted division be named Murray. Rather, we suggest that this division or the newly created division in Bacchus Marsh and Melton should be named Fraser in honour of former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who is the only deceased former Prime Minister to not have a division named in his honour.

Gippsland and McMillan

In our suggestion to Redistribution Committee, we submitted that the boundary between Gippsland and McMillan remain unchanged. While our suggestion had both Gippsland and McMillan meeting current and projected enrolment criteria, Gippsland was at the low end and McMillan was at the high end of the permitted projected population.

After reviewing other suggestions in relation to the Gippsland and McMillan boundary, if it were the view of the Committee that the populations of Gippsland should increase and McMillan (per the Liberal Party's suggested boundaries) should decrease, we would urge the Committee to consider the boundaries suggested by Charles Richardson or, alternatively, the Nationals.

Per Charles Richardson's suggestion – the city of Moe would be transferred to Gippsland (where it has shared communities of interest with other La Trobe Valley cities of Morwell and Traralgon) and the Churchill area would be transferred to McMillan (where it fits well with Mirboo North and other South Gippsland towns). This would be a transfer of current population 12,435 and projected population 12,400 from McMillan to Gippsland and a transfer of current population 8,490 and projected population 8,444 from Gippsland to McMillan.

GIPPSLAND

	Electors 2017	Electors 2019
Retains	97417	98316
Gains From		
MCMILLAN	12435	12400
Loses To		
MCM LLAN	8490	8444
Total	109852	110716

MCMILLAN

	Electors 2017	Electors 2019
Retains	98479	101829
Gains From		
GIPPSLAND	8490	8444
Loses To		
GIPPSLAND	12435	12400
LA TROBE	9966	11232
Total	106969	110273

Per the Nationals' suggestion – Gippsland would gain the Foster area and Wilsons Promontory from McMillan. This would be a transfer of 6,702 current population and 6 743 projected population from McMillan to Gippsland.

GIPPSLAND

	Electors 2017	Electors 2019
Retains	105907	106760
Gains From		
MCMILLAN	6702	6743
Total	112609	113503

MCMILLAN

	Electors 2017	Electors 2019
Retains	104212	107486
Loses To		
GIPPSLAND	6702	6743
LA TROBE	9966	11232
Total	104212	107486

Corangamite and Wannon

One concern raised in a number of suggestions was how to appropriately increase the population of the division of Wannon to within the required quota, whilst also reducing the population of the division of Corangamite. There was disagreement between the suggestions received by the Redistribution Committee as to how to do so. Suggestions ranged from those which advocated that Wannon be extended into southern parts of Mallee with Mallee extending further east and the Golden Plains LGA being reunited within the division of Ballarat, to those which argued that the Colac Otway Shire should be transferred from Corangamite into Wannon.

Similar suggestions which advocated for the transfer of the Colac Otway Shire into Wannon were made at the time of the last Victorian federal redistribution in 2010. At the time, the Redistribution Committee correctly rejected these arguments. As there has been no change in the communities of interest in the division of Corangamite to warrant removing either part of or the entire Colac Otway LGA from the division, it is appropriate and consistent that the Committee should again reject these suggestions.

There are significant communities of interest between communities in the Colac Otway Shire and the greater Geelong area which would be divided if Colac Otway Shire was to be moved into Wannon. The direct transport links forged by the soon to be duplicated Princes Highway between Colac and Geelong and V/Line train services are integral to the key economic and social connections between the population centres of Colac and Geelong. These include the crucial links between Barwon Health and Colac Area Health which provide specialist healthcare to the regional areas of Corangamite, and the significant number of students from the region who undertake tertiary studies in Geelong. If Colac Otway Shire was moved into Wannon then significant communities of interest along the Great Ocean Road such as between Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek, Kennett River, Wye River, Separation Creek, Lorne, Aireys Inlet and Torquay would be also divided. These communities, joined by the Great Ocean Road, share significant ties highlighted by their united response to the December 2015 bushfires in Separation Creek and Wye River.

The suggestions which advocated for an eastern movement of the Wannon / Corangamite boundary failed to recognise that doing so would fundamentally alter the character of this division. The division of Corangamite includes extensive farming and agricultural businesses which extend from the division of Corangamite's western boundary, eastwards, through to Winchelsea, Inverleigh, Deans Marsh and parts of the Birregurra locality which are located in the Surf Coast Shire LGA. With the City of Colac being a key economic and social centre of agriculture for the division of Corangamite, there are very significant communities of interest between the farming communities of the Colac Otway Shire LGA and the Surf Coast Shire LGA.

The current division of Corangamite covers the outer suburbs of Geelong, the Surf Coast Shire LGA, the Colac Otway Shire LGA, the Borough of Queenscliffe and some of the Golden Plains Shire LGA. Suggestions which advocated moving the Colac Otway Shire LGA into Wannon generally also sought to reunite the Golden Plains Shire LGA area within the division of Corangamite. Such suggestions would result in significant changes to the character of the division from being an east-west division which includes a large part of the Great Ocean Road and one of Australia's most iconic coastlines to being a north-south division which covers from the southern suburbs of Ballarat, the southern and eastern suburbs of Geelong as well as a significantly reduced portion of the coastline. Given the cultural, historic and social significance of the division of Corangamite's coastline and its many inter-linked coastal and farming communities, incorporating the southern suburbs of Ballarat and townships with close social, economic and historic ties to Ballarat within the division of Corangamite undermines the strong communities of interest which currently exist in the division, and is a comparably weak option for the Redistribution Committee to adopt.

Moving the Colac Otway Shire LGA into Wannon would also result in the division of Corangamite having no physical or tangible connection with Lake Corangamite, which currently forms part of its western boundary with Wannon. This raises serious concerns as this federation division was named after Lake Corangamite, whose name derives from the Aboriginal word for “bitter”, reflecting the salt content of the lake.

Deakin

There were some suggestions to the Redistribution Committee (including the suggestions from the ALP and the Greens) that used the Maroondah Highway as the boundary between Deakin and Menzies. If this were to be the boundary between the two division, it would split communities of interests in Ringwood North, Warranwood, Croydon Hills and Croydon North. Using the Maroondah Highway as a border splits Ringwood in half, and is inconsistent with Ringwood being a major activity centre. The AEC in its 2010 redistribution correctly concluded that Ringwood North would be united with Ringwood to the greatest extent possible given its shared economic, social, and regional community of interest. Using the Maroondah Highway as a border would further fragment Ringwood and create greater division and voter confusion in the Ringwood community and ignore the fact that Ringwood North and Warranwood are both centred on Ringwood as a major activity centre and these suburbs are grouped along important transport corridors. This is why we endorse the Maroondah City Council’s suggestion to join Ringwood North and Warranwood with the remainder of Ringwood, within the clearly defined Maroondah LGA. In 2013, the Victorian Electoral Boundaries Commission correctly concluded Ringwood was the centre of communities of interest for Ringwood East, Ringwood North, Croydon South and Mitcham – uniting them within the one local and state government district including Ringwood North in its entirety.

Presently, the Croydon community is divided and can only be reunited if Croydon North and Croydon Hills, both within the Maroondah LGA, are transferred from Menzies to Deakin to align Croydon’s communities of interest. We endorse the Maroondah City Council suggestion to unite Croydon Hills and Croydon North with Croydon and emphasise its significance. Croydon is the major activity centre for Croydon North and Croydon Hills and these areas share social, economic and transport corridors. They were also correctly identified as needing to be redistributed by the Victorian Electoral Boundaries Commission to form the state electorate of Croydon. It is logical for Croydon Hills and Croydon North to be reunited with their communities of interest, which are centred on Croydon as a major activity centre, within the Maroondah LGA and state government district. The current Dorset Road boundary with the division of Casey acts as an effective boundary as the part of Croydon to the east of Dorset Road orients towards Mooroolbark along Hull and Liverpool Roads rather than across Dorset Road towards Ringwood.

Certain suggestions also advocated for the removal of Vermont and Vermont South from Deakin, fragmenting strong communities of interest shared within Vermont and the Whitehorse LGA. These suggestions are inconsistent with the view of the AEC in 2010, which correctly determined that uniting Vermont and Vermont South as well as the remainder of Forest Hill within the Whitehorse LGA was appropriate. This is further supported by these localities being connected to other parts of Deakin by the Maroondah and Burwood Highways and Springvale Road. Vermont South is a key transport corridor connecting the Burwood Highway to Eastlink and providing passage for local bus routes. Vermont and Vermont South are united by communities of interest within the one state district and the Whitehorse LGA and any separation would unnecessarily divide these communities. As these communities only recently became a part of the division of Deakin (reuniting neighbouring communities of interest), removing Vermont South from the division would cause serious voter confusion and, once again, split the district and divide the community.

Casey

Extending the division of Casey west into Nillumbik – as suggested by David Walsh, Paul Rodgers, Ben Ellwood, the Greens, the ALP, and Charles Richardson – included the same general proposal that Casey should lose territory on its urban western boundary and gain territory to the south from the division of La Trobe and to the north-west from the divisions of McEwen, Jagajaga, and, in some suggestions, Scullin. These suggestions move Casey into Nillumbik Shire across the mountain range to the west of Yarra Glen and as a result ignore the physical features of the area, significant local communities, and traffic corridors that define both the Diamond Valley and the Yarra Valley. The lack of communities of interest due to a mountain range separating them was a critical reason for the transfer of the East Riding (including Yarra Glen and Dixon’s Creek) from the former Shire of Eltham in 1958 to the former Shire of Healesville which followed another earlier transfer in 1912 of part of the Shire of Eltham to the Shire of Healesville. This view is also reflected in the formulation of a range of community organisations and institutions including local newspapers: the Yarra Valley Leader is distributed in Yarra Glen while the Diamond Valley Leader is distributed only as far east as St Andrews and Kinglake but not across the mountains.

In Dr Mark Mulcair’s comments on suggestions for the 2010 redistribution he commented on Charles Richardson’s suggestion in relation to adding Nillumbik to Casey: “Despite the two councils [Yarra Ranges and Nillumbik] being adjacent there is almost no connection between them; for the most part, they are separated by the Yarra River at a point where there is no crossing of it. Yarra Ranges Shire’s community of interest lies along the Yarra Valley toward Lilydale, whereas the rural parts of Nillumbik look back towards Eltham and Greensborough. Nillumbik should remain within Jagajaga, McEwen or (less ideally) Scullin.” We would refine Dr Mulcair’s comment by pointing to the fact that there is only one road connecting the Diamond Valley to the Yarra Valley, namely, the Yarra Glen-Eltham Road. Rather than a recognised major traffic corridor, the Yarra Glen-Eltham Road is a dangerous country road that travels a long distance with extremely limited population. Previously, when McEwen took in both the Yarra Valley and the Nillumbik Shire it also included the Toolangi-Kinglake junction meaning that the Melba Highway provided an additional means of transport, however, this flawed boundary was recognised and both Casey and McEwen were redrawn to address the false representation of communities of interest provided for in that former seat.

Tim Colebatch’s suggestion for “the eastern half of the shire of Nillumbik be added to Menzies along with perhaps Yarra Glen” disregards communities of interest and utterly ignores the practical transport difficulties and community ties. Yarra Glen is a critical town within the Yarra Valley as the gateway to Northern Victoria and with many of the wineries in the Yarra Valley in the surrounding area.

Bryce Paterson proposes a radical redistribution of Casey in which the division would lose much of its urban territory in the west and extend north and south to incorporate both Mt Buller and Mt Baw Baw. This suggestion is unrealistic in that it crosses both the Great Dividing Range in the north east and the Dandenong Ranges to the east to create a division with extremely limited means of communication and transport within the division. This suggestion ignores the proper orientation of Mt Baw Baw towards and within the division of Gippsland.

Maroondah City Council suggests two options for bringing more of Maroondah LGA within the division of Deakin. The first involves a transfer of electors from Menzies to align LGA and divisional boundaries along the Manningham and Maroondah boundary. The second is to also align the Deakin-Casey boundary to the boundary between Yarra Ranges and Maroondah LGAs. Either of these proposals does not preclude the other, and Maroondah City Council indicates a preference for aligning the Deakin-Menzies boundary to the Maroondah-Manningham boundary. The current boundary

between Deakin-Casey utilises the major thoroughfare of Dorset Road which is a much clearer boundary than the boundary of the Maroondah LGA. This provides an effective dividing line between communities with the part of Croydon to the east of Dorset Road orienting towards Mooroolbark along Hull and Liverpool Roads rather than across Dorset Road. This recognises the long-established practice recognising that communities of interests within urban areas are less defined by LGA boundaries than by transport corridors, major roads, and natural boundaries. Furthermore, Maroondah City Council's second option would lead to dislocating communities of interest within Casey and including new areas that have no real community of interest with the rest of the division.

Maintaining the status quo was also raised in the suggestions of Martin Gordon, Mark Mulcair and Darren McSweeney. We recognise and agree with the importance of uniting the Yarra Valley in one electorate along with its peri-urban service centres and urban fringes in Mooroolbark, Chirnside Park, and Lilydale to reflect the orientation of the community. Bus services run from Healesville and Yarra Glen to Chirnside Park shopping centre following the Maroondah and Melba Highways. From the Upper Yarra, services also terminate at Chirnside Park demonstrating the critical nature of Chirnside Park to the rest of the Yarra Valley. While it is our view that every attempt should be made to avoid unnecessary changes to boundaries, this is not always possible when considering other boundary changes. This is why a pragmatic approach should be taken and extending Casey north along the Maroondah and Melba Highways provides the clearest indication of the communities of interest that exist along these transport corridors and applies the natural and logical connections between the Yarra and Goulburn Valleys and the Yarra Ranges, Murrindindi and Mansfield Shires.

La Trobe

The ALP's suggested division of La Trobe transfers electors haphazardly between existing and suggested divisions and causes inconsistencies within communities of interest and means of communication and travel within suggested divisions. A glaring example of this inconsistency and non-application of s66(3)(b) *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* occurs in splitting Narre Warren South in the middle of a residential area that causes residents south of Sweeney Reserve in the suggested division of Holt having to travel through La Trobe to enter and leave their neighbourhood. Furthermore, the shared community of the Narre Warren area is not reflected in keeping a small pocket of Narre Warren South and removing all of Narre Warren, Narre Warren North, and most of Narre Warren South from the division of La Trobe. The ALP's suggestion could better satisfy s66(3)(b) if it kept all these areas together in its suggested division of Holt. The ALP further compounds these concerns by removing Berwick from its suggested division of La Trobe thereby removing a key link between the southern and central areas of La Trobe.

In the Greens submission, electors in Emerald, Cockatoo, and Gembrook are transferred from La Trobe to Casey. These localities generally orient themselves towards the outer south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne and the West Gippsland area. To include them in the suggested division of Casey would place them in a division that spans from the northern suburbs of Melbourne with little in common with the communities in Yarrambat, Hurstbridge, Kinglake, Lilydale, or Healesville (among others) especially with no significant nor direct means of communication or travel linking these areas. This is further reinforced by the communities in Emerald, Cockatoo, and Gembrook being in the Cardinia LGA which is the interface between Melbourne and Gippsland. The transfer of these areas from La Trobe to Casey and the drawing of the northern boundary in the manner of Green's suggested division of La Trobe appears to be merely for convenience rather than to give effect to real communities of interest and physical features of the areas that form part of the suggested division.

Dunkley

The ALP's suggestion moves the northern boundary of Dunkley from Ballarato Road to Hall Road. This suggestion fails to recognise the significant connections between the north of Seaford and the neighbouring suburbs of Carrum, Patterson Lakes and Carrum Downs, particularly with Carrum Downs Shopping Centre and Lakeview Shopping Centre in Patterson Lakes as key economic and social hubs for people living in these areas. The ALP's suggestion divides Carrum Downs in two, splitting a strong community of interest. It also weakens the strong boundary of Ballarato Road which is a key boundary for six federal electorates. The ALP's suggestion also proposes transferring a small part of Mornington from Dunkley to Flinders. This would split another strong community of interest, with the proposed boundary running along the Main Street of Mornington (the main centre and shopping strip). This would mean shops on one side of Main Street would be in the division of Dunkley and shops on the other side in Flinders.

The Greens' suggested southern boundary for the division of Dunkley would isolate Mount Eliza, and together with Baxter, remain the only parts of Mornington Peninsula LGA in the division of Dunkley. If this were to be considered by the Redistribution Committee, it would split regional, social and economic community interests connecting Mount Eliza and Mornington. The Greens also suggested transferring the remainder of Baxter into the division of Dunkley. Should this be considered necessary and appropriate by the AEC, the Liberal Party would not object to this suggestion being incorporated into the proposed boundaries.

Aston

The Greens' suggested southern boundary for the division of Aston would move the boundary over Churchill National Park and incorporate Lysterfield South in the division. Moving the boundary as suggested by the Greens would effectively split the division into two – with the small area of Lysterfield South completely separated from the rest of the division by the large, mountainous Churchill National Park. The area suggested is completely disconnected from Knox and would unnecessarily break apart communities of interest. This unrealistic suggestion by the Greens should not be given consideration by the Redistribution Committee as it fails to consider the physical features, area, and the communities of interest within the suggested division of Aston.

Melbourne Ports

The Greens have suggested that Docklands be transferred from the division of Melbourne to the Division of Melbourne Ports. This is a questionable application of the matters for consideration in s66(3)(b) *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* as Docklands is separated by the Yarra River at its widest point from the remainder of the proposed division of Melbourne Ports with no direct pedestrian access and limited vehicle access via the freeway passing over the Bolte Bridge. There are also no shared local sporting teams or community groups that cross the Yarra at this point and all shops and amenities in Docklands would be located in the proposed division of Melbourne. Docklands should remain in the division of Melbourne as it is the natural extension of the Melbourne CBD with no physical boundary dividing the areas, all means of transport and communication in Docklands are directly linked to the Melbourne CBD, and all amenities and community groups extend into the Melbourne CBD. Given there has been no change since the last redistribution in the communities of interest, means of communication and travel, or the physical features between Docklands and the Melbourne CBD, due weight should be given to the subordinate matter of using the existing boundary for the division of Melbourne and leaving it unchanged in relation to Docklands – especially given that the present boundaries of Melbourne Ports meet the current and projected enrolment criteria.

Furthermore, the Greens also suggest that the division of Melbourne Ports transfer Caulfield East from Melbourne Ports to the division of Higgins. The primary motivation for this transfer of electors is clearly to offset the increase in electors in Docklands in the suggested division of Melbourne Ports. Transferring Caulfield East to Higgins would remove key amenities and means of communication and travel that are used by residents in Caulfield, Caulfield North, and Caulfield East and put them in another division. Importantly, the division of Melbourne Ports is home to the largest Jewish community in Victoria (and second largest in Australia) which is centred in the Caulfield area. Moving Caulfield East to Higgins (that does not have a large Jewish community), would have a detrimental impact on the social interests of the community. The transfer of Caulfield East to Higgins runs counter to the matters for consideration by the Redistribution Committee and compounds the errors in the Greens suggested inclusion of Docklands in the division of Melbourne Ports.

The ALP's suggested new division (Fraser)

The ALP's suggested new division of Fraser takes a generous interpretation of s66(3)(b) *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, especially the physical features and area of the suggested division in that it encircles a part of another division to create a contiguous division. Should the Redistribution Committee consider means of communication and travel in terms of efficiency of travel within the proposed division, the suggested division would fail as it would be far more efficient, most of the time, for residents to travel through the suggested division of Maribyrnong to reach the other side of the division of Fraser. There would also be instances where residents would find it easier to travel through the suggested division of Calwell rather than a convoluted path through residential streets within the division. Furthermore, the suggested division of Fraser is physically fragmented by the Ring Road, Calder Freeway, and adjacent parkland, causing the proposed division to resemble a collection of discarded parts of neighbouring divisions rather than a division constituted to create a community with shared interests.

Maribyrnong

The Greens' suggested division of Maribyrnong's western and eastern halves are physically separated by the Maribyrnong River with no means of travel crossing the section of the river contained by the suggested division. This would require travel via another division in order to get from one side of the division to the other. In giving due consideration to the matters in s66(3)(b) *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, it is difficult to envisage circumstances where the Redistribution Committee could propose a division as suggested by the Greens.