



Comment on objections 8

Australian Jewish
Association

3 pages



Comments on certain submissions objecting to proposed draft boundaries for the Federal Redistribution of Victoria.

Key point: It is noted that some individuals and groups from the Jewish community have lodged submissions claiming the proposed change in boundaries for the seats of Higgins and Macnamara could have an adverse impact on the Jewish community. It is errant nonsense that electoral boundaries, Federal or State, have a material impact on Jewish life in Melbourne.

We recognise there are a number of Jewish community voices in Australia. The Australian Jewish Association (AJA) is by far the largest as measured by engagement on social media. AJA did not lodge a primary submission and does not express a view in support or against the proposed electoral boundary changes in general or for the electorates which have significant Jewish communities including Goldstein, Higgins and Macnamara. This is not our expertise nor our role.

Further, Jewish community life is not in the slightest influenced by the location of electoral boundaries. Indeed, it is likely that the vast majority of members of our community could not accurately describe the current boundaries in which they reside. Choice of and attendance at synagogues (or not), membership of various Jewish community interest groups, social interactions, education, and shopping locations are all undertaken on a day-to-day basis with no consideration given to electorate boundaries.

We note that with regard to Higgins and Macnamara, the submissions from the two major political parties, Labor and Liberal, express different views. The submissions lodged with the AEC which purport to provide a Jewish perspective come from individuals or organisations with office bearers who seem to have confused partisan political views with what should be their roles of representing interests in the Jewish community.

A case in point is the submission by Zionism Victoria (ZV). Its submission falsely claims the status of being “the” roof body in Victoria. The Mission stated on its website is: *It’s our mission to lead and encourage Jewish and Zionist activity and expression within Victoria, to represent the Jewish community, to promote and communicate Israel’s interests within the broader Victorian community and to promote and strong and positive relationship between the State of Victoria and the State of Israel.* The emphasis for a Zionist body is rightly on Israel relations. How this morphs into issues related to electoral boundaries is unclear. Yet the ZV submission actually reflects quite closely a partisan Labor perspective, even to both the Labor and ZV submissions sharing the specific suggestion to transfer the suburb of Windsor. In our view, this is unlikely to have arisen spontaneously within ZV and is an inappropriate expression of political partisan advocacy for a community organisation with the role of ZV.

AJA is disappointed that some within our community have tried to attribute to the conduct of Judaism in Melbourne some role for electoral boundaries when indeed there is none.

CONCLUSION:

All important activities within the Jewish community function irrespective of electoral boundaries. To suggest that electoral boundaries have either a significant positive or negative effect on Jewish life is false and misleading. The submissions purporting to express a Jewish community perspective objecting to boundary change issues may be more concerned with providing support for the authors' preferred member of parliament or candidate. The actual dynamics of the Jewish community and Jewish life in Melbourne do not support objections 38, 42, 53, 54 and 58.

Your sincerely,



Dr David Adler, President
26 April 2021

