

RECORD OF INQUIRY

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Public inquiry of the augmented Electoral Commission for Victoria

Conducted on Tuesday 13 August 2024 in Melbourne

Panel members:

The Hon. Susan Kenny AM KC

Chair of the Electoral Commission

Dr David Gruen AO

Australian Statistician and non-judicial member of the Electoral Commission

Mr Tom Rogers

Electoral Commissioner

Mr Andrew Greaves

Auditor-General for Victoria

Mr Aneurin Coffey

Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria

Mr Craig Sandy LS

Surveyor-General of Victoria

(Recorded and transcribed by Legal Transcripts Pty Ltd)

1 CHAIR: Is everyone ready to commence? I think it's 12.30 so
2 we might commence now I think. As you know, this is a
3 meeting of the augmented Electoral Commission of
4 Victoria. Good morning everyone. I think it's still
5 morning. No, it's not, it's good afternoon everyone I
6 think. Welcome to this hearing. I'd like to begin by
7 acknowledging the traditional custodians on the land on
8 which we meet today and pay my respects to the elders
9 both past and present.

10 Let me introduce myself. I'm Susan Kenny, the
11 chairperson of this augmented Electoral Commission. The
12 other members of the Electoral Commission are
13 Dr David Gruen, the Australian statistician who is unable
14 to be with us today, Mr Tom Rogers on my left who is the
15 Australian Electoral Commissioner. The other members who
16 make up the augmented Electoral Commission are
17 Mr Andrew Greaves, the Auditor-General for Victoria and
18 on my right and the other is Mr Aneurin Coffey, the
19 Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria to my left and
20 to my far left - to my right, I beg your pardon and to my
21 far right is Mr - I beg your pardon. If I knew my left
22 and right it would help, wouldn't it. And to my left is
23 Mr Craig Sandy, the Surveyor-General of Victoria.

24 Very well. Now, by way of preface I just remind of you
25 the principles of the Electoral Act which affect us
26 today. Part IV of the Commonwealth Electoral Act sets out
27 the requirements to be followed in conducting
28 redistributions. The redistribution is required today
29 because Victoria's entitlement to members of the House of
30 Representatives has decreased from 39 to 38.

31 In accordance with section 66 of the Electoral Act the

1 Redistribution Committee for Victoria prepared a proposal
2 for the redistribution of Victoria into 38 federal
3 electoral divisions. The proposal, together with written
4 reasons for the proposal required by section 67 of the
5 Electoral Act, was released by the Redistribution
6 Committee on 31 May this year and it looks like that.

7 In accordance with section 68 of the Electoral Act,
8 interested individuals and organisations were invited to
9 make written objections to this proposed redistribution
10 and to provide written comments on those objections. A
11 total of 508 objections and 122 comments on objections
12 were received within the required timeframe. I think
13 maybe, I'll just say so, that this is a good thing. I
14 think it reflects how much people are involved in the
15 process.

16 The augmented Electoral Commission is required by
17 sub-section 72(1) of the Electoral Act to consider all
18 objections lodged in relation to the redistribution
19 proposal and all comments on objections. The inquiry
20 today provides the opportunity for members of the public
21 to make submissions on those objections. The Electoral
22 Act specifies how the redistribution process is conducted
23 and the factors to be taken into account.

24 Sub-section 73(4) of the Electoral Act states that the
25 primary consideration for the augmented Electoral
26 Commission is that each electoral division meets certain
27 numerical requirements in the following, a redistribution
28 quota and the projected enrolment quota, subject to
29 acceptable tolerances around these two quotas.

30 Now, subject to an electoral division satisfying those
31 numerical requirements, sub-section 73(4) of the

1 Electoral Act also requires that we have regard to
2 communities of interest within electoral divisions. This
3 includes economic, social and regional interests. We also
4 need to have regard to means of communication and travel
5 within electoral divisions and the physical features and
6 area of electoral division.

7 The boundaries of existing electoral divisions are
8 also considered but are subordinate to the other factors.
9 Boundaries may change and often there has been
10 compensating adjustments to boundaries to make sure the
11 electoral divisions are within the numerical
12 requirements.

13 Now, the inquiry today will be recorded. Transcripts
14 of proceedings will be made available as part of the
15 augmented Electoral Commission's report and will be on
16 the Australian Electoral Commission's website once this
17 report has been tabled in Parliament.

18 I would also draw your attention to the fact that we
19 have some members of the media present today. I'd ask
20 them of course to focus on ensuring this is an
21 opportunity for speakers to have their say and for
22 proceedings to run smoothly. Should the media have any
23 questions I'd ask they speak to the person who's put up
24 their hand towards the back of the room and I'd also ask
25 that that discussion take place outside the hearing room.

26 If there is an emergency, emergency exits and
27 stairwells are located near the lifts. In case of a fire
28 alarm please wait for instructions from hotel staff and
29 please do not use the lifts unless directed to do so.

30 Now, we would ask people making submissions to come to
31 the lectern. Please state your name before you begin your

1 presentation. We would like to ensure that all those
2 present are able to make a submission if they wish and to
3 enable this happen and I'm factoring in that some
4 presentations will be made online, we would ask you to
5 keep your remarks to no more than five minutes.

6 A yellow card will be shown at the four minute mark
7 and a pink card at the five minute mark. Subject to
8 timing, there may be an opportunity to provide further
9 remarks once everyone has had their opportunity to speak
10 at least once. If you've not registered to speak and
11 decide during the course of listening to others you'd
12 like to speak, please talk to the person at the back of
13 the room currently waving their hand. Thank you.

14 As this week marks a federal parliamentary sitting we
15 realise the difficulties it presents for federal MPs who
16 wish to contribute to this inquiry. In this circumstance
17 the Commission has provided video conferencing for a
18 limited number of participants. The maximum speaking time
19 for them is also five minutes.

20 Now, I would emphasise, as I have indicated already,
21 that this is an opportunity to present to new arguments
22 or materials, not simply to read out your objection or
23 comments on objection. These have been read thoroughly by
24 us already and are publicly available on the AEC website.

25 There's another matter I just wanted to draw your
26 attention to and that's some may be concerned that five
27 minutes is too short a time in which to say all they wish
28 to say. What I propose is that you speak for five minutes
29 first, if at the end of the inquiry there is time you may
30 have an opportunity to speak again. If you've brought
31 notes with you of what you want to say and you don't have

1 a chance to say everything that is set out in your notes,
2 you may, if you wish, hand your notes to a member of the
3 secretariat at the door and they will receive them from
4 you and we will treat them as the additional things that
5 you spoke about today.

6 So you have a choice, either wait till the end and see
7 if there's time and if there's not time, hand in any
8 notes that you have, or if after your five minutes are up
9 you want to hand in your speaking notes, you're at
10 liberty to do so and we will read them directly as
11 spoken.

12 Now, where does that take you. After the inquiry we'll
13 deliberate, consider all that we've received. We'll
14 endeavour to make a public announcement as soon as we
15 can.

16 There is a brief housekeeping point and that's the
17 matter of bathrooms. They're located in the lift lobby.
18 Can I also ask that you ensure that mobile phones and any
19 other electronic devices are turned off or on no volume.
20 There is a scheduled break at 3. 20 pm as well. Now, I
21 think that's probably it.

22 The next matter for me is to ask the first speaker,
23 who will be Jeff Waddell, who one of the secretariat has
24 agreed to read out, what he wishes to say. So I thank
25 Nicole Taylor for reading out the submissions made by Mr
26 Jeff Waddell.

27 MS TAYLOR: Nicole Taylor, National Redistributions Manager,
28 reading out a statement from Jeff Waddell. Statement: 'I
29 thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a
30 statement to this inquiry. While I would have preferred
31 to have been there in person, my line of work and the

1 lack of advanced notice, four days, prevented me from
2 being able to make alternative arrangements to make that
3 happen.

4 With over a decade of contributing to redistributions
5 at both Commonwealth and State/Territory level behind me,
6 I have developed a knowledge that you only get by doing
7 something repeatedly. You learn to feel whether a
8 proposal will work or not. I don't see every alternative
9 but I never stop learning. With over 500 objections, and
10 a further 122 comments on objections, the Committee will
11 have its work cut out trying to come to some sort of
12 compromise and as the Committee is no doubt aware, it's
13 never going to please everybody.

14 My approach is don't give me problems, give me
15 solutions. Objections for objections sake are a waste of
16 everyone's time. I will first address the two bullet
17 points raised in the email sent from the Victorian
18 Redistribution Secretariat in relation to this inquiry
19 which were not addressed in my objection.

20 (1), Electoral divisions in which the suburbs of
21 Mernda and Wollert are located.

22 I believe that the boundary between Scullin and McEwen
23 can be amended so that the entire locality of Wollert is
24 in Scullin and the entire location of Mernda is in
25 McEwen. Wollert has a natural connection to Epping via
26 Epping Road and Mernda has a connection to Doreen via
27 Bridge Inn Road. That connection is enhanced by the
28 Mernda rail line. I absolutely support boundary changes
29 between McEwen and Scullin to make this happen.

30 (2), Boundary of the proposed Division of Wills. If
31 the Maribyrnong/Wills boundary is retained to Moonee

1 Ponds Creek, alternative boundaries could be as follows:
2 Wills southern boundary reverts to Park Street but
3 continues further eastwards along Park Street and the
4 southern boundaries of SAs, 20607114304 and 20607114308
5 to Merri Creek. Melbourne regains from Wills the Carlton
6 North - Princes Hill SA2 in addition to the part that the
7 Fitzroy North SA2 south of Park Street.

8 Maribyrnong takes the north-west corner of the current
9 division of Melbourne using Arden Street as the boundary
10 and continuing into Grattan Street and north along Royal
11 Parade to Park Street, taking those parts of Parkville
12 and North Melbourne from the Division of Melbourne. For
13 aesthetics, I would also move the divisional boundary
14 with Wills to the Parkville locality boundary in SA1
15 20601110722. I believe this would involve zero electors
16 that establish Ormond Road, Brunswick Road as an
17 additional means of communication in travel between the
18 current and proposed Maribyrnong.

19 Overall, these changes would not only further reduce
20 the number of electors transferred between divisions but
21 also add weight to my suggestion of moving the boundary
22 between Calwell and Maribyrnong to Moonee Ponds Creek
23 through the Gladstone Park, Westmeadows SA2 and yes, I
24 have crunched the numbers for all of these changes. In
25 relation to the balance of the bullet points I have
26 covered all of these and more in my objection OB235.

27 I refer all members of the augmented Electoral
28 Commission to that document commencing from p8. In all,
29 25 divisions where I have proposed changes to the AECs
30 draft. I believe I have made a strong case as to why
31 these changes improve overall what the Committee

1 proposed. South-east metro divisions, I have lived and/or
2 worked in Melbourne south-east and outer east, SA4s 211
3 and 212 from 1988 right through today. My suggestions for
4 Aston, Bruce, Casey, Chisholm, Deakin, Flinders, Holt,
5 Isaacs, Kooyong, La Trobe and Menzies, in addition to the
6 reinstatement of Higgins and the abolition of Hotham, are
7 all based on those 36 years of local knowledge.

8 One of the highlights, which I didn't emphasise in my
9 objection, was the Whitehorse LGA being neatly split
10 between Deakin, Kooyong and Menzies. With Menzies to the
11 north of Whitehorse Road, Kooyong south of Whitehorse
12 Road and west of Middleborough Road, and Deakin south of
13 Whitehorse and east of Middleborough Roads, how simple is
14 that?

15 I should also add that my logic for moving Flinders
16 eastwards to the southern part of the City of Casey is
17 due to the massive number of market gardens spread across
18 Somerville, Pearcedale, Devon Meadows and Cranbourne
19 South.

20 Other divisions, my alternative suggestions for
21 Ballarat, Bendigo, Calwell, Corangamite, Corio,
22 Gellibrand, Hawke, Lalor, Nicholls and Wannon are, I
23 believe, well argued in my objection and generally
24 improve on what the Committee has proposed.

25 I would also add that transferring the locality of
26 Grovedale from Corangamite to Corio is a natural fit with
27 the localities of Belmont and Highton to its immediate
28 north. With the additional changes proposed to
29 Maribyrnong, McEwen, Melbourne, Scullin and Wills, I
30 believe this represents an even better solution for these
31 five divisions.

1 One cautionary note to this statement is that the
2 changes to McEwen around Mernda and Wollert, in addition
3 to my proposed adjustments, pushes McEwen perilously
4 close to the lower end of current enrolment tolerance
5 105,205. I have calculated that both sets of changes
6 leaves McEwen with a current enrolment of 105,268. If my
7 calculations are out by just 64 electors some additional
8 movements would be required, e. g. move all of Coldstream
9 to McEwen. I encourage the Committee to model my proposed
10 boundaries plus the amendments above and see how they
11 look. I wish you all well in your deliberations.' End of
12 statement.

13 CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you, Ms Taylor. Now, the next person,
14 he is unable to attend but I understand the secretariat
15 will read the submission, is that of Fiona Mowbray. Is
16 somebody in a position to do that?

17 MS TAYLOR: Statement from Fiona Mowbray. 'Thank you for
18 reading out my views' - - -

19 CHAIR: Ms Taylor, I think it might be best just to pause
20 because I understand Mr Keith Wolahan, MP, is by you.
21 Will the secretariat let us when he's had an opportunity
22 to come in. Good afternoon, Mr Wolahan.

23 MR WOLAHAN: Yes.

24 CHAIR: Nice to see you.

25 MR WOLAHAN: Thank you so much.

26 CHAIR: I'm going to not waste your time but ask you to
27 commence your submissions. I understand you know the time
28 limit is five minutes in each case.

29 MR WOLAHAN: I do and thank you for facilitating this public
30 hearing and allowing me to dial in from Canberra as you
31 know where I will be seen this week. Can I begin just by

1 acknowledging your independence as it is fundamental to
2 your role as a trusted institution of our democracy and
3 that's very important to me and I think I can fairly say
4 to everyone up here involved.

5 I appear as the Member for Menzies, not on behalf of
6 my party, who I understand will appear later today. I'd
7 like to address three points briefly.

8 The first is the local government area of Manningham.
9 Menzies has since its inception always fully overlapped
10 with the LGA of Manningham. The draft sees that change
11 for the very first time, losing two areas to the east,
12 being Wonga Park and Park Orchards.

13 As you can imagine, members get very fond of their
14 communities and their areas and I am certainly very fond
15 of them in that area. Menzies, Manningham pairing has
16 existed for reason as it's where the city meets the
17 country and that's their slogan and I believe it's a
18 slogan that applies to Menzies. It's a unique green wedge
19 area not found anywhere else south of the Yarra in metro
20 Melbourne.

21 It has a strong sense of identity and urban risk of
22 bushfires and to that end I draw your attention to the
23 submissions by Manningham City Council and the Wonga Park
24 CFA, Captain Aaron Farr. I won't otherwise address that.

25 Point No. 2 is the broader issue of orientation of the
26 seat. The draft shape of Menzies, to be frank, is
27 confusing with the link between Box Hill South as
28 proposed and Warrandyte hard to justify.

29 These issues on reflection are created by what appears
30 to be a radical departure on orientation, rotating
31 Menzies anti-clockwise around Deakin and we respectfully

1 submit, or I respectfully submit, that this is an
2 inappropriate rotation and that is noted in a large
3 number of submissions. And I might add both major
4 political parties make that point in the submissions.

5 There are two alternative approaches put to you on how
6 to amend this. One is to the east and largely reflects
7 previous boundaries of Menzies around pulling north and
8 that's outlined in the ALP draft and I'm not going to
9 speak to that. The other is to the west around Balwyn, as
10 noted in my party's submission, and I would like to
11 conclude with a few comments on Balwyn.

12 You're bound by statutory obligations and in the Act.
13 I believe it's section 66(3)(b)(i) that talks about
14 communities of interests and it notes economic and social
15 interests. Melbourne is a multicultural city and Menzies
16 is particularly multicultural and I'd like to focus on
17 those communities. My party has proposed a solution that
18 advocates a minimal three seat adjustment to the draft.
19 It would see Balwyn North join Menzies, Chisholm move
20 further north into Box Hill South and Kooyong adjust
21 accordingly, and it would only affect those three seats
22 in minimal rotation.

23 When you look at the demographic heat maps around the
24 Balwyn, it's claim to belong as a community of interest
25 to Menzies is compelling and it's driven by ABS data. I
26 draw your attention to my party's submission. It's
27 objection 398 and from page 10 onwards we've put some
28 heat maps in and I think the maps of themselves again,
29 they draw ABS data.

30 The first is the Chinese diaspora on page 10 which is
31 in Figure 1. When you look at that heat map you will see,

1 as is reinforced by many submissions, that there is a
2 north and south diaspora. The eastern suburbs of
3 Melbourne have one of the most significant Chinese
4 diaspora not only in the country but in the world outside
5 of mainland China and this is also reflected in my
6 personal experiences. I constantly get phone calls,
7 emails and social media followers on Chinese platforms
8 like Leichardt Red from the Balwyn area.

9 They shop in Shoppingtown. They're kind of the Chinese
10 Senior Citizens Club and we constantly have overlaps with
11 that area. I notice time is running short. Page 11 of the
12 Italian diaspora, the figures speaks for itself and
13 that's on figure 2 and then figure 3 shows the common
14 reach diaspora in Balwyn. And then if you also look at
15 incoming education, on the ABS data Balwyn North has
16 immediate household income per week of almost \$1,000
17 below the Kooyong average but only \$400 above the Menzies
18 average and there are many geographical links such as
19 transport, shopping at Westfield and schools.

20 After keeping Higgins, when you look at the totality
21 of submissions that have been made to you, I think
22 placing Balwyn and Balwyn North as a subset of that in
23 Menzies has been one of the most popular suggestions of
24 the redistribution process with more than 18 supportive
25 objections and comments. I hope that's within time.

26 CHAIR: That's very helpful. Thank you very much indeed.

27 MR WOLAHAN: Thank you.

28 CHAIR: Next speaker is Mr Peter Khalil, the Member for Wills.

29 Good morning. We can't hear you. You're on mute.

30 MR KHALIL: Good morning.

31 CHAIR: Good morning. Mr Khalil, I'm not going to waste your

1 time. You've got five minutes to speak and I won't waste
2 it any more.

3 MR KHALIL: Okay, thank you. Can I get started?

4 CHAIR: Yes, if you would.

5 MR KHALIL: Good afternoon, Justice Kenny and all the members
6 of the Commission. I can't see you but thank you for the
7 opportunity to speak to you on the proposed electoral
8 boundaries with the specific reference to the Division of
9 Wills. As the federal Member for Wills I feel compelled
10 to contribute to this important conversation largely due
11 to the concerns conveyed to me and my staff by so many
12 constituents and community groups affected within the
13 affected suburbs and I'll note that there have been over
14 50 community submissions to the AEC in respect to the
15 division of Wills.

16 The Commission would know that all the current
17 electorate of Wills resides within the LGA of Merri-bek
18 and this has been true for a long time and has assisted
19 my work in advocating for the community with the council
20 and although it's not always possible to align local and
21 federal boundaries, when this can be achieved, and is
22 already in place, I think there is substantial value in
23 maintaining that relationship.

24 If I can just direct your attention to the western
25 border of Wills, the western boundary is historically,
26 and with only very minor deviations, followed the Moonee
27 Ponds Creek from Brunswick West to the northern border of
28 Glenroy and has been a natural border that separates that
29 creek, that separates what have been dissimilar
30 communities because of the creek and has actually grouped
31 together intimately connected communities for decades.

1 With respect to Oak Park and Glenroy, these draft
2 changes represent the largest transfer of population out
3 of Wills, over 7,200 residents from the suburbs of Oak
4 Park and Glenroy from Wills into the Division of
5 Maribyrnong. This is as a result, as you know, of the
6 draft proposal to change the western boundary north of
7 O'Hea Street from the Moonee Ponds Creek to Pascoe Vale
8 Road.

9 Now, this proposal frankly came as a surprise to many
10 residents of Oak Park and Glenroy, cutting those suburbs
11 in half, as they know that Pascoe Vale Road actually is
12 the spine that connects the two halves of one body and
13 contains many crucial communities of interest on either
14 side of Pascoe Vale Road that ought to be kept united.
15 For instance, a large number of sports clubs that I've
16 built formed relationships share facilities, players and
17 communities across both sides of that draft proposed
18 boundary, includes Hadfield Cricket Club, Glenroy
19 Calisthenics, Therry Penola Amateur Football Club and Oak
20 Park Footy Club, all of which actually have a lot of
21 players, family members and supporters that come from
22 either side of the draft boundary of Pascoe Vale Road.

23 There are also distinct migrant refugee, religious and
24 ethnic groups straddling either side of Glenroy and Oak
25 Park, mainly with Lebanese, Kurdish Lebanese and Arabic
26 speaking and Muslim communities and I've been involved
27 intimately in these communities as my time as Member for
28 Wills. I would note, with respect to the Muslim
29 Australian population, that they aren't just centred in
30 Fawkner.

31 A genuine engagement over the years with these

1 communities reveals a very large number of distinct
2 groups with different languages, beliefs, community
3 centres and social authorities across Glenroy, Oak Park
4 and Pascoe Vale. And in fact Wills as a division
5 (indistinct) strains of Turkish, Lebanese, Pakistani,
6 Indian and Bangladeshi backgrounds, among others. And
7 there are actually two mosques in Glenroy, with Glenroy
8 Sunnah Mosque and the Uthman Dhun Nurayn Mosque, both of
9 which are attended by residents that live either side of
10 Pascoe Vale Road who are part of Glenroy, as well as Oak
11 Park, Hadfield and Pascoe Vale.

12 In addition I wanted to bring to attention to the
13 Commission the Nepalese community. It's a community of
14 interest rapidly established both in Glenroy and Oak
15 Park. Wills has been a little Nepal because of the new
16 and emerging Nepali group. Pascoe Vale Road is the spine
17 in the centre of this new and emerging community and that
18 community has established in food, retail, community
19 services, conference specific, small businesses like
20 removalists and tailors and even a driving school, and a
21 lot of the communities lives on either side of Pascoe
22 Vale Road and is part of one community.

23 In respect of Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West,
24 the changes there, the draft changes south of O'Hea where
25 the Moonee Ponds Creek, again in the draft has been
26 replaced by the CityLink as a boundary. I would also
27 submit that this has a negative impact on the sections of
28 the suburbs of Brunswick West and Pascoe Vale South,
29 splitting them again because the methods of travel, the
30 geographical border of the Moonee Ponds Creek and the
31 share of LGA and Merri-bek. All of these are supported in

1 these sections of these suburbs as part of Wills, as part
2 of the broader community and service delivery and keeping
3 again those community interests connected and again with
4 sports clubs. Many players and family members would be
5 separated again, you know, Brunswick Cricket Club,
6 Brunswick Footy Club, Brunswick Netball Club and the West
7 Brunswick Tennis Club.

8 Just in conclusion, I don't think that the changes to
9 Wills proposed in the draft redistribution are
10 necessarily the optimal or best solutions to the very
11 many demographic challenges I know that the Commission
12 and the Committee are facing with respect to
13 redistribution and I would ask the Commission to actually
14 consider alternative proposals that address those
15 demographic challenges but do not necessarily have the
16 negative impacts on the communities of interest that I've
17 discussed today. And I'll draw your attention not just as
18 the community submissions on these points but also to the
19 submission of the Victoria Labor Party which sets out
20 some of those alternatives, which I think would keep the
21 community of Wills, our community of Wills, unified and
22 take into account the physical, the transportation, the
23 communities of interest considerations which I have
24 raised with you today. I know I only have five minutes so
25 I think I'll wrap it up there and thank you for giving me
26 opportunity to make a public submission.

27 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. It's very helpful and we
28 appreciate very much you coming today, Mr Khalil, so
29 thank you.

30 MR KHALIL: Thank you very much. Thank you, cheers.

31 CHAIR: Bye. Now, the next speaker is Carina Garland, Member

1 for Chisholm. Ms Garland, hello.

2 MS GARLAND: Sorry.

3 CHAIR: Can you hear us? We can hear you?

4 MS GARLAND: I can now, thank you very much. Yes, I can hear
5 you now.

6 CHAIR: We can hear you. We can't see you.

7 MS GARLAND: No, we had some technical difficulties so I'm just
8 dialling in on my phone if that's okay?

9 CHAIR: That's not a problem at all. Thank you so much for
10 coming. I'll hand it over to you now. You know the five
11 minute limit, I'm sure, and I won't waste time.

12 MS GARLAND: Great. Thank you so much and I really appreciate
13 the opportunity to provide this additional feedback and
14 indeed really appreciate the opportunity throughout this
15 process to be able to make a submission. Really my
16 submission is fairly simple. It contends around just
17 preserving as much as possible (indistinct) communities
18 of interests within the boundaries of the electorate.

19 Of course I understand the requirements of the AEC in
20 terms of ensuring that we have equal numbers, or
21 relatively equal numbers across electorates (indistinct)
22 of course we are seeing, notice in Victoria in the
23 eastern suburbs which naturally have flow on effects by
24 Chisholm. Looking at the draft maps I can see very much
25 the logic of the AEC there and the attempt to contain
26 communities of interest and make sure that there is
27 parity in numbers of voters in electorates.

28 But I would suggest that in terms of improving the
29 maps in order to preserve the communities of interest,
30 that maintaining the southern boundary of Chisholm as it
31 is at the moment, including more of Mulgrave, Glen

1 Waverley, Notting Hill, Mount Waverley and Chadstone,
2 would be desirable in that avoids separating out suburbs
3 in some instances by a matter of streets which I think
4 are quite confusing to electors and disruptive to
5 sporting clubs and school communities amongst other
6 communities.

7 I note too that the proposed maps mean that there will
8 be more Local Government areas included in Chisholm,
9 again understandable that there are these sorts of
10 changes given the removal of the seat in the eastern
11 suburbs of Melbourne. However, and this is described in
12 my submissions already made, that it would be desirable
13 to avoid too many LGAs coming into the electorate and
14 therefore putting up, you know, in many parts LGAs. So
15 therefore we've proposed that - and I note that ALP
16 Victorian Branch submission makes its argument too, to
17 really try and contain the parts of Stonnington with
18 Melbourne East in Hotham and therefore, you know, being
19 at the amount of new LGAs being both brought in and being
20 split across too many electorates, although those
21 mentioned I understand that it's impossible perhaps to
22 contain it too neatly given the requirement to remove a
23 seat in the eastern suburbs and noting that the proposed
24 seat be removed (indistinct) again.

25 So largely I understand, you know, there are charges
26 more broadly that AEC put forward and really my
27 submission and my comments today speak to really, as I
28 mentioned, contained suburbs, contained communities where
29 possible and I've never participated in a process like
30 this before so I'm not sure if there are questions but
31 I'll just leave it there.

1 CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Garland. It's not our practice
2 to ask questions unless we don't understand something
3 that's been said and we do understand and are grateful
4 for your comments indeed. I think that's probably the
5 most I can say and we're very appreciative of you coming
6 along today.

7 MS GARLAND: Well, thank you very much and as I said earlier,
8 I'm very appreciative of this opportunity so thank you
9 very much.

10 CHAIR: Thanks again. Now, the next speaker is
11 Cassandra Fernando, Member for Holt. Good morning,
12 Ms Fernando.

13 MS FERNANDO: Good afternoon.

14 CHAIR: Good afternoon, yes, it is.

15 MS FERNANDO: Justice Kennedy - Kenny, sorry. Thank you so much
16 for your time first of all. But I would like to state as
17 the federal Member for the Division of Holt I would like
18 to thank the Redistribution Committee for all your hard
19 work on the proposed redistribution. As a resident of the
20 Division of Holt I have lived in Melbourne south-east
21 ever since I migrated to Australia 25 years ago.

22 My entire life has been based in the region. It is
23 where I went to primary school, high school and worked
24 before entering Parliament. I have a deep knowledge of
25 the local area, communities and geography. I believe that
26 in the proposed redistribution the AEC has taken the most
27 factual approach in drawing the new borders for the
28 Division of Holt and I would deeply object to any changes
29 to the proposed redistribution.

30 If you look at Holt on the map there is one notable
31 feature that centres the electorate, unites our

1 communities. This is the South Gippsland Highway which I
2 believe represents the major means of communication and
3 travel within the proposed electoral division. The South
4 Gippsland Highway connects every major community in the
5 division from Hampton Park to Tooradin, provides
6 connectivity to the major activity centres in Dandenong,
7 Clayton and the Melbourne CBD for residents of Holt,
8 which means defining Holt as a division based along
9 Gippsland Highway with Bruce being a division based on
10 the Princes Freeway.

11 In considering this, Cranbourne North is a suburb that
12 sits in the middle of these major arterial roads. The
13 last area I touched on in my submission was school zones
14 within the division, and keeping school zones intact with
15 electoral divisions the Committee can ensure that a
16 member of parliament can address their specific needs and
17 challenges.

18 As a federal member part of my role is to provide
19 civic education and this can be confusing to students and
20 their parents if the federal member who speaks in school
21 isn't from the electorate they live in. Currently,
22 several schools across the border between Bruce and Holt
23 have half of their students in the Bruce section of Narre
24 Warren South and half in Cranbourne North in Holt. By
25 moving Cranbourne North into Bruce, the catchment of
26 these schools fall nearly entirely within the Division of
27 Bruce.

28 The movement of any other suburbs, such as Hampton
29 Park, from Holt into Bruce would find communities defined
30 by school zones more divided than under the proposed
31 model.

1 I would like to end by noting the comment on
2 objection 60 from the vice president of Hampton Park
3 Cricket Club and the comment on objection 72 for a long
4 term resident of Hampton Park who both note a shared
5 community of interest between Hampton Park and
6 Cranbourne. I firmly support the current AEC proposed
7 redistribution and object to any changes to the draft
8 proposal. Thank you very much for your time.

9 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed and that's very helpful.

10 MS FERNANDO: Thank you so much.

11 CHAIR: Thanks, Ms Fernando.

12 MS FERNANDO: Take care. Bye-bye.

13 CHAIR: Bye. One more by way of video and this is Mr Josh
14 Burns, the Member for Macnamara. Good morning, Mr Burns.

15 MR BURNS: Good afternoon, everyone, how are you? I'm sure
16 it's morning somewhere but in the nation's capital we're
17 stuck in the afternoon.

18 CHAIR: I'll use it as an excuse that it's morning somewhere.
19 Thank you.

20 MR BURNS: Yes. It's happy hour somewhere I think is the
21 phrase, yes.

22 CHAIR: I won't waste your time too much because you have five
23 minutes and I'm sure we're very grateful for you coming.

24 MR BURNS: Yes, let's get on with it. Yes, perfect. Well, thank
25 you, Justice Kenny and members of the Commission. Thank
26 you very much for the opportunity to make a few remarks
27 regarding the redistribution proposal for Macnamara.
28 First of all can I say that I think the Australian
29 Electoral Commission has done a very thoughtful job in
30 working out the very complicated parts of the inner parts
31 of Melbourne and I commend you on your draft boundaries

1 thus far.

2 I also wanted to make the very brief remark that,
3 whatever the boundaries are, it is a true honour to be a
4 member of parliament and I would be honoured to serve
5 whichever members of the community fall under the
6 boundaries of Macnamara and will be seeking their support
7 to be re-elected as the Member for Macnamara in the
8 upcoming election.

9 I want to first of all make the remark about and make
10 the point about the number of people who were to be
11 changed into Macnamara. Obviously it was slightly under
12 quota and therefore some changes had to be made. The
13 thing I like about the Australian Electoral Commission's
14 proposal was that it was a minimal amount of people,
15 including people who were previously in Macnamara. That
16 in my calculation is about 9,000 electors as opposed to
17 what the Liberal Party's submission proposes, which is
18 well over close to 30,000 electors, just over 27,000.

19 Obviously, to minimise the number of changes when
20 making these decisions is obviously preferable and I
21 would just highlight the Electoral Commission's approach
22 of what you put forward by introducing Windsor into the
23 electorate and putting South Yarra into the new
24 electorates. I wanted to also highlight the use of
25 St Kilda Road as a natural boundary. It is a major
26 arterial inside Melbourne. Obviously with tram lines at
27 the new Melbourne Metro train line, roads, on one side is
28 the Tan, the botanical gardens, on the other side is the
29 arts precinct.

30 It is a huge divider. It literally is the road that
31 leads into the CBD that divides the CBD from the east

1 side to the west side. So, to divide it between two
2 electorates I think makes perfect sense and in fact the
3 communities on the west side which are in my electorate
4 at the moment, or the proposal to be in my electorate,
5 are ones that have a lot in common with each other. And
6 while I also note that to the east side of St Kilda,
7 where the City of Melbourne does come down to, almost to,
8 Windsor, obviously is reflected in the proposed draft
9 boundaries of the Australian Electoral Commission has put
10 forward.

11 On the west side there are communities where it makes
12 a lot more sense, or is a lot more fluidity, and that is
13 reflected in the school zoning of those communities. In
14 Port Melbourne, Fishermens Bend and South Melbourne and
15 Southbank, those communities and the school zoning,
16 whether it be Port Melbourne Secondary College, Albert
17 Park College, the primary schools around there, South
18 Melbourne Primary, even South Melbourne Park Primary, the
19 zoning for those schools are all to the west of St Kilda
20 Road and east of it is other school zoning as well.

21 So I think that St Kilda Road is a boundary combined
22 with the fact that the LGA of Melbourne are on the east
23 side which would be in the new seat or the new designed
24 set of Melbourne, makes perfect sense while maintaining
25 some parts of the Melbourne LGA in Macnamara because
26 those parts are the parts of Melbourne that already have
27 so much to do with the other parts of the City of Port
28 Phillip components of my seat.

29 So I think that the way in which the Australian
30 Electoral Commission has proposed to redraw that
31 component and the new components of my seat make perfect

1 sense. Obviously, I would reiterate the fact that the
2 City of Melbourne has to cross the Yarra at some point
3 and I think that the Australian Electoral Commission has
4 chosen the right path.

5 I'll make the very quick point that the Liberal Party
6 wanted to use the West Gate Freeway as a natural border.
7 It really is just a road that people cross over in order
8 to go from their homes to the shops. It isn't a
9 dissecting component between communities. People on
10 either side of the West Gate Freeway just literally cross
11 over by one of the many crossings and no-one obviously
12 travels along the West Gate Freeway unless you're
13 literally driving across it. No-one has a shop on the
14 side of it, for example, unlike St Kilda which really
15 does dissect the communities.

16 So the final point I'd make very, very quickly because
17 I know I'm running out of time, is that Windsor has
18 previously been a part of Macnamara. It makes sense to
19 re-join Windsor with Macnamara because of, (a), minimal
20 disruption, but (b), also the Windsor community in the
21 East St Kilda community is very connected and the traffic
22 to go from Windsor to East St Kilda often is far less
23 than the traffic that go through to the north. I know I'm
24 running out of time so I might leave my comments there.

25 CHAIR: That's very helpful indeed. Very helpful, Mr Burns,
26 indeed. Thank you so much for your appearance today.

27 MR BURNS: All right, thank you. Nice to see you all.

28 CHAIR: Thank you. Now, the next speaker is I think present
29 with us. Jennifer Jacomb. You just take your time.

30 MS JACOMB: I have a brief for the Commissioners.

31 CHAIR: Now, Ms Jacomb, just before you begin can you state

1 your name?

2 MS JACOMB: How stupid of me. Jennifer Jacomb, otherwise known
3 as William Robert Jacomb. I have a proper brief to the
4 Commissioners. I've been well trained in the federal
5 parliament. I have to be somewhat disagreeable to you. I
6 respectful requested that because of my compromised
7 immunity, because I'm going through cancer, I asked the
8 secretariat to put me at the top of the line. They didn't
9 do it. I seen everyone else go down. I should have been
10 done and go out without having my immunity compromised.

11 (2), I have a formal complaint. I made a formal
12 complaint to the State Commissioner. I put that same
13 complaint to you now, Honourable Ms Kenny, KC, that
14 nothing be done on this matter until the complaint has
15 been decided and communicated by me or to me. (3), formal
16 complaint, misconduct, rest - God. I'm getting my words
17 out.

18 CHAIR: Redistribution.

19 MS JACOMB: Because there's only five minutes for the hearing
20 it disenfranchises those who work for a living who would
21 otherwise have to take a day off and community groups.
22 This is outrageous and ensures disenfranchisement to the
23 community. What should have been done is it should have
24 been done over the weekend, Saturday or Sunday and it
25 should have made - what's the word. Instead of making it
26 easy for you without the considering the consideration of
27 others.

28 Point 4, as with regards yourself, Commissioner, or
29 Chief Commissioner, as a barrister working in
30 constitutional, public, commercial and tax law, you know
31 the concept of natural justice and allowing people to

1 have a genuine opportunity to change the outcome of a
2 decision. Yet by the way things have been going on with
3 decisions it's mishandled and it's not the case.

4 Finally, almost finally, this should have been done at
5 the start of an election cycle, not when you've done the
6 final returns. With the exception in Higgins, which has
7 to be done, the rest of it should be done after the next
8 election, not at the end of this election. The final
9 actions I'll be doing, I'll be raising with the APS about
10 you putting my life at risk and I don't like it and nor
11 should I.

12 You've not looked at the federal policies for
13 disability in cancer or the AEC decisions for this. I
14 will be contacting the Federal Attorney-General regarding
15 maleficence in office and I know what it means and I
16 shouldn't have to raise it. Finally, next week I will be
17 looking - I was respected in the parliament, the
18 ministers, members and senators. I will be raising this
19 issue of putting my life at risk and it's simply not
20 acceptable. Now, that means I have done it in four
21 minutes. I will give you the remaining one minute to your
22 - back to the Committee.

23 CHAIR: Thank you very much.

24 MS JACOMB: And I have a hand-up brief.

25 CHAIR: Can you give that to the person, one member of the
26 secretariat.

27 MS JACOMB: Yes, I can do that. There you are five - no, six of
28 them. Thank you. Much gracious. Actually well done. If I
29 was back in an agency (indistinct) you would promote this
30 officer now.

31 CHAIR: Thank you very much.

1 MS JACOMB: Have a nice day.

2 CHAIR: Thank you. Now, I wonder is Dr Allen present? Would
3 you like to come to the lectern, Dr Allen.

4 DR ALLEN: Thank you very much for the opportunity to present
5 to the - do you need a microphone? This is the
6 microphone is it? Yes, okay. My name is Dr Katie Allen
7 and I am here as the former federal Member for Higgins
8 from 2019 to 2022 and as a constituent of Higgins who's
9 lived in Higgins for more than 40 years and raised my
10 family of four children with my husband.

11 I am deeply concerned about the impact of the proposed
12 abolition of Higgins I would have on, Committee. I have
13 approached as the former member for Higgins by many
14 constituents and received hundreds of messages, phone
15 calls, texts, emails and been approached in person. And I
16 would like the Commissioners to note the significant
17 amount of objections that have been received from the
18 general community and also note that the last time an
19 abolition was reversed in 2010 by Murray there was
20 approximately 80 objections. This time there was
21 somewhere between 700 and 800, so nearly tenfold more
22 objections to the abolition of Higgins.

23 I'd like to note that the process for the AEC has been
24 difficult, having data, it was given to them from the
25 ABS, that was incorrect and that has had a significant
26 impact on the timing of this procedure and that we're now
27 in election zone and an election could be called at any
28 moment and that is very confusing and of concern to the
29 general community.

30 The general community has reflected to me the concerns
31 that overall population of Australia has grown from

1 26.2 million to 26.7 million in one year and that that
2 rapid flux has an impact and we're going from 151 to
3 150 representatives so that confuses the general
4 population. In the meantime, Victoria, which had a very
5 bad impact from COVID, which went from first being
6 continued to grow back to seven million it was projected
7 in 2024. Further to that, Flemington which is almost the
8 same as the boundaries of Higgins, is projected to grow
9 at a quite healthy rapid rate going forward. And I'd also
10 like the Commission to note that, at the last
11 redistribution, in addition to gaining a seat when we
12 were losing population, and now losing a seat when we're
13 gaining population, and potentially having to gain a seat
14 at the next redistribution, in Higgins we were told we
15 were going too fast and we actually had 5,000 electors
16 removed from the seat.

17 So that is causing great concern in the community and
18 I think that deeply reflects the general sort of comments
19 coming from the community that they'd like to be
20 continued to be seen as one community and there are
21 10 points that I'd like to address fairly quickly.

22 Firstly, Stonnington and Higgins are almost one and
23 the same and bound by natural demographic and manmade
24 barriers, including to the north, Yarra River and Monash
25 Freeway, to the south, Dandenong Road which is a major
26 arterial road, to the east Warrigal Road and Chadstone
27 Shopping Centre and to the west, Punt Road.

28 As a Member for Higgins, I used to say we stretch from
29 Chapel Street to Chadstone and that encompasses a very
30 dynamic, diverse and wonderful community. We also have a
31 natural grouping by government defined boundaries, with

1 primary school zones defined by the Victorian Government
2 defining 80 per cent of local primary school catchments
3 within Stonnington, and we also have planning zones along
4 High Street, Chapel Street, Toorak Road, Malvern Road,
5 Glenferrie Road and Wattletree Road all developing
6 significant commercial strips. We've also high risen to
7 protect the natural low rise behind those high rise areas
8 along major arterial roads, which is excellent planning,
9 including densification and allowing for the low rise for
10 residents with their lovely leafy green - green leafy
11 streets that are Stonnington and Higgins combined.

12 Thirdly, we have bonded by shared activities,
13 including access to community amenities. If you go to
14 Harold Holt swimming pool, well, you're more likely to go
15 to Harold Holt swimming pool than to the City of Yarra on
16 the other side of the CBD. Malvern Headspace, for
17 instance, is a catchment area for trans youth and as the
18 MP who actually acquired the funding for Malvern
19 Headspace we did that to ensure that people could travel
20 along those east-west tram boundaries, young people to
21 access the amenities that they needed.

22 If you look at the Kooyong level crossing, we did an
23 analysis and we found that the removal of it may benefit
24 major commuters going through that thorough from north to
25 south but actually not locals. Locals are actually put
26 off and I used to have my practice along Morris Street
27 there. They're put off by crossing that boundary because
28 of up to 20 to 30 minute delays at that point. So the
29 north-south access is not a good access for the people of
30 Higgins. The Cabrini catchment, Cabrini Hospital
31 catchment, a 508 bed catchment, would be divided into

1 three divisions, so healthcare may be affected. Access
2 to - and we do know that funding to federal
3 representation has been successful, and we're able to
4 fund a \$6m cancer research institute at Cabrini Hospital,
5 because of strong representation to the local federal
6 member, myself.

7 With regards to aged care, we know that there are a
8 lot of shopping strips that have buses that allow people
9 who are older to access them in a simple way and we also
10 know that the access to transport is along the east-west
11 divided with routes for trams, route 58, 72 and 6 which
12 are all in the east-west connection, and then the
13 Frankston, Sandringham and Glen Waverley lines, several
14 head in that direction.

15 Lastly I'd like to say I do not understand why we are
16 losing a name like Higgins, of someone who is at the
17 foundation of our country. Not only was Higgins one of
18 the few members to see Victoria transition from
19 (indistinct) federation, there's a long history of social
20 equality and equity. While we are not - we should
21 eliminate the seat Hotham which is one that has a
22 man - a name in controversy for his contributions as
23 Governor of Victoria with the deterioration of Indigenous
24 and workers' rights. Thank you for listening to my
25 submission.

26 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed, Dr Allen. The next speaker
27 will be the speaker on behalf of the Victorian Labor
28 Party.

29 MR FOGARTY: Thank you, Justice Kenny. On the red card I'll
30 just submit it to - I'll just submit the final full
31 statement - there you go, at the end. So Justice Kenny

1 and members of the Commission, thank you for the
2 opportunity to speak at today's inquiry. On behalf of
3 Victoria Labor I extend our sincere thanks to the
4 redistribution committee and the - - -

5 CHAIR: Can I just stop you one moment. Can you say your name
6 at the commencement?

7 MR FOGARTY: Sorry, of course. Jett Fogarty. I'm the assistant
8 state secretary of Victorian Labor. Cool, then we'll
9 start. So thank you to the secretariat for your work in
10 producing these draft maps and for holding this inquiry.
11 First on Menzies, Deakin and Aston, the abolition of
12 Higgins has given cause for a significant redrawing of
13 Melbourne's eastern suburbs. This dynamic provides the
14 Commission an opportunity to provide, to properly re-
15 orient, the Divisions of Deakin and Menzies east to west.

16 This orientation not only brings these divisions into
17 conformity with others in the Melbourne metropolitan
18 region, but it reflects the means of transport,
19 communities of interest and connection in Deakin and
20 Menzies, while returning the natural boundary of the
21 Eastern Freeway. The Eastern Freeway and EastLink had
22 been the southern border of Menzies up until 2009.

23 The communities on either side of the Eastern Freeway,
24 namely, Doncaster and Doncaster East to the north and Box
25 Hill and Blackburn to the south, have developed
26 independently of each other. This is reflected in
27 objections, including from the Chinese Community Society
28 of Victoria. The Eastern Freeway is a wall between
29 communities that are so obvious to mark local government
30 boundaries, state divisions and, for nearly half a
31 century, was used for the federal boundaries.

1 I won't re-litigate the details of this argument,
2 which are outlined in our written submissions, but I will
3 make two supplementary points. (1), the Liberal Party's
4 proposal for the inclusion of Balwyn North in the
5 Division of Menzies makes little sense and Victorian
6 Labor is opposed to it. Not only would their proposal see
7 Menzies further offend the natural border of the Eastern
8 Freeway and Kooyong Creek, it will also offend the LGA
9 boundary between Manningham and Boroondara, divide the
10 localities of Balwyn and Balwyn North and, more
11 significantly, divide Boroondara LGA - and more
12 significantly divide Boroondara LGA, across three federal
13 divisions.

14 Second, the Divisions of Menzies and Deakin primarily
15 cover three LGAs, Manningham, Maroondah and Whitehorse.
16 It is clear that it is not possible to preserve all three
17 LGAs within a single division. I will outline how we
18 believe they can be more logically divided. Maroondah, we
19 note that Aston has historically been based on the Knox
20 LGA, which no longer has enough projected electors to
21 maintain the division on its own.

22 We recognise the inevitability of Aston growing into the
23 Maroondah LGA. The draft boundaries sever a minor strip
24 of the City of Maroondah along the southern boundary
25 that's arbitrarily dividing the suburb of Heathmont. We
26 argue that it is far better to split the City of
27 Maroondah into three sections (indistinct) from the Mount
28 Dandenong Road, Bayswater intersection that's shifting a
29 larger and more contiguous subsection of the LGA into
30 Aston. It is worth noting that our proposed Deakin,
31 Menzies, Aston of Maroondah is not dissimilar to how the

1 LGAs are split at state division level.

2 Manningham. The proposed split of Maroondah enables
3 the AEC to preserve the City of Manningham within
4 Menzies, as it is historically done. The topographical
5 differences between Manningham and Maroondah could not be
6 more acute. On one hand, the eastern part of Manningham
7 City contains the green wedge and an 11 kilometre stretch
8 of sparsely populated parkland. By contrast, the northern
9 part of Maroondah City is built up and highly
10 industrialised. The draft boundaries arbitrarily set Park
11 Orchards and Donvale from the rest of the green wedge of
12 Menzies could be a small leafy community with a busy
13 metropolitan district.

14 Whitehorse, all proposed shifts of Maroondah also
15 enables reunification of this if Whitehorse was within
16 the Division of Deakin. No matter how you draw the
17 boundaries, splitting the City of Whitehorse divides a
18 core community's interest. The suburbs of Blackburn
19 South, Blackburn and Blackburn North are effectively one
20 long residential district characterised by the wide green
21 and leafy streets. The current federal boundaries split
22 Blackburn South and Blackburn down the middle, whereas
23 the proposed boundaries splits all three suburbs.
24 Similarly, the suburbs of Box Hill South, Box Hill and
25 Box Hill North are effectively one contiguous group
26 characterised by high rises, shopping precincts and
27 providing essential transport hub for the eastern
28 suburbs. The current federal boundaries divide these
29 suburbs horizontally and through the centre of Box Hill.

30 I will now speak to the boundaries of Wills, Melbourne
31 and Maribyrnong. The redrawing of Wills has attracted

1 significant community concern, particularly as it relates
2 to its western boundary with Maribyrnong. The mechanics
3 of reuniting the localities which are proposed to be
4 divided requires, as we submit, a transfer of electors
5 across Wills, Melbourne and Maribyrnong. It is most
6 logical to unite Carlton North and Fitzroy North with
7 Carlton and Fitzroy in the electorate of Melbourne. Our
8 submission, and that of others in this inquiry, will
9 detail that logic, our written submission that is. Here I
10 wish to affirm the case for the inclusion of North
11 Melbourne and Parkville in the Division of Maribyrnong.
12 In successive redistributions the Committee has got
13 Maribyrnong deeper south towards the CBD, resulting in
14 the inclusion of Flemington and Kensington. Giving the
15 significant redrawing of the Division of Melbourne as
16 part of this redistribution, all options should be
17 considered and losing North Melbourne and Parkville to
18 Maribyrnong confirms with the previous logic accepted by
19 the Redistribution Committee.

20 Flemington and Kensington and North Melbourne and
21 Parkville are inextricably linked by communities of
22 interest, geography and means of transport. This argument
23 has been raised in previous redistributions and indeed by
24 Mr Bandt in May 2018. These localities show tram routes
25 and train stations like Macaulay train stations. They
26 drive through Racecourse Road and Flemington Road to get
27 around. Kensington and North Melbourne are united by
28 three bridges and they are all within the Melbourne LGA.

29 They also share a significant community of interest in
30 high rise housing tenants. Now, I've also got here stuff
31 about the division of the location of Mernda and Wollert

1 but would you like me to submit that to the officials or
2 would you like me to say it out loud? It's entirely up
3 to you, Justice Kenny?

4 CHAIR: If it takes more than five minutes I think that would
5 be the most convenient.

6 MR FOGARTY: Perfect, yes.

7 CHAIR: But we will read it.

8 MR FOGARTY: Very good, thank you.

9 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed for that. The next speaker
10 is the Honourable Julian Hill who is online. Good
11 afternoon.

12 MR HILL: Hello.

13 CHAIR: Mr Hill, I'm going to give you the floor on the basis
14 that five minutes is a short time and the less said by me
15 the better.

16 MR HILL: Thank you very much and thanks for being flexible in
17 the ringing routine. I'll just focus my remarks briefly
18 on Bruce and I do understand much of the broad object,
19 including the need to go south to pick up some
20 greenfields growth areas given the numerical
21 requirements. Cranbourne North looks a bit odd on the
22 map, but it's probably compelling in logic and pretty
23 much the only thing you can do.

24 There's just some peculiar details with the
25 communities and interested unnecessarily jump
26 administrative and natural boundaries, so I just wanted
27 to take you through those with some neater local
28 resolutions and some points to reflect upon. I'll just
29 highlight three (indistinct). I know that your diligent
30 staff and yourself read the submissions.

31 Firstly, just on the question of the Division of

1 Isaacs jumping the Dandenong railway line and submitting
2 with Dandenong CBD down the main street is just really
3 strange and I think unnecessarily so. Sometimes you need
4 to do strange things because of maths, but there are
5 better ways to do this. The local (indistinct) at
6 Dandenong West, as it is known locally, is clearly
7 directly connected as a part of the urban fabric of
8 Dandenong there and Dandenong Central. I live just on the
9 other side of the road behind the market. My office is
10 there. I know that community intimately.

11 The railway is a very hard and natural boundary and
12 has been so for decades. South of the railway line, there
13 in Isaacs, it's not actually even residential, it's
14 industrial and recreational, so the consequence would be
15 a strand of little residential area in Isaacs completely
16 divorce from the rest of that electorate that splits
17 central Dandi in two.

18 We have achieved almost something almost unprecedented
19 and there's pretty much, I think, universal support in
20 the submissions affixing this in some way both from the
21 Liberal party, the Greens party, the Member for Isaacs,
22 who unfortunately couldn't make it because of his
23 commitments today, and many community submissions which,
24 I say, I had nothing to do with to remain in Bruce. So
25 that's a core point, it's just a very peculiar local
26 thing.

27 There's a few ways you can address this. I have
28 highlighted the Mulgrave issue. There is a sliver of
29 Mulgrave, and therefore the City of Monash, still in
30 Bruce.

31 The Police Road there is the natural administrative

1 boundary for the community of interest that's also the
2 administrative boundary between Monash and Greater
3 Dandenong. I can say as the local MP it's caused enormous
4 and daily confusion for residents in Mulgrave to have
5 that little sliver split.

6 So if you can fix that on the way through that might,
7 that's an observation. Noble Park, just to be clear from
8 a local point of view, Sky Rail and the level crossing
9 removals, mean that the railway is no longer a hard
10 boundary in Noble Park, so you do have a lot of
11 flexibility in terms of community of interest to
12 consolidating areas in Noble Park between Hotham and
13 Isaacs if you need to balance numbers and do it sensibly.

14 I will note and acknowledge the objections and
15 comments around the potential to consolidate all of
16 Dandenong and resolve the Dandenong problem through
17 putting Dandenong South from Isaacs into Bruce. It's not
18 something that I have proposed. I suppose I do concede or
19 acknowledge it's less peculiar or more logical than the
20 current proposal, but it's not something I am arguing
21 for.

22 Second point briefly, just on the eastern end, there's
23 numerous objections and comments that illustrate that
24 Bruce's eastward growth into La Trobe and Berwick is
25 neither necessary or desirable. To include a sliver of
26 the rural Shire of Cardinia and Beaconsfield it's clearly
27 just done because you needed a few hundred votes. I got
28 the maths of it, but it's just deeply peculiar. It
29 dilutes the community of interest of both electorates and
30 old Berwick township is intimately related with
31 Beaconsfield and the semi-rural areas around it, rather

1 than sort of back into the urban fabric of Casey, the
2 established bits. Many objectors and some members have
3 actually said it would be more logical to shift some of
4 Bruce into La Trobe, that Narre Warren North semi-rural
5 bit which does have a degree of sense and logic.

6 There's a strategic point there, aside from the
7 community of interest issues. In the medium term La Trobe
8 will have to eat up some more slow growth areas as
9 inevitably it shrinks to accommodate the growth in
10 Pakenham and Officer. The proverbial (indistinct), as my
11 grandmother would say, would see that the hills are going
12 to have to release, recede to Casey, and you could avoid
13 having to chop and change later on by reconsidering this
14 boundary as numerous submissions have said.

15 Final point, just on the south-eastern bit, the
16 consequence, it depends of course how and if you chose to
17 address the Dandenong point and the Berwick point, but
18 the consequence then is a little bit of mucking around in
19 the La Trobe Holt Bruce interface. There's many ways you
20 can do it. I haven't proposed a specific one. Narre
21 Warren South consolidating more into Bruce from Holt
22 makes a lot of sense. Hampton Park in the medium term
23 would probably have to come in.

24 But I'll finish on the interesting point of Clyde
25 North. It's a giant suburb. It can never be consolidated
26 in one electorate and you've got a lot of flexibility
27 there to finish balancing the numbers next to Cranbourne
28 North. It's basically the same community and the same
29 green fields kind of areas and people in rounding out
30 that boundaries.

31 So I just wanted to leave you with those three.

1 Dandenong, Berwick bit really doesn't make sense now
2 we're in the long term and then the south-east bit,
3 there's a number of ways you can cut it. So they're my
4 strategic points but thank you for your work.

5 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. That was very helpful.

6 Thanks.

7 MR HILL: Okay, any other questions? We're good?

8 CHAIR: We are good, I think.

9 MR HILL: Okay. Enjoy.

10 CHAIR: Now, Mr Xiao, I think, is the next member - - -

11 DR ALLEN: Speaker, I beg your pardon. I would like to speak
12 about Menzies.

13 CHAIR: Yes.

14 DR ALLEN: In the speed of having to present. So my name is
15 Dr Katie Allen, former federal Member for Higgins and I
16 would like to see the abolition of Hotham and to note,
17 for the record, that I actually said the word Holt 1. 42.
18 11 in my presentation just recently. So thank you for
19 that opportunity.

20 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed.

21 MR XIAO: Good day.

22 CHAIR: Good morning.

23 MR XIAO: Okay, hi. Thanks to the Commission for taking the
24 time.

25 CHAIR: Now just remember to say your name before you commence.

26 MR XIAO: So my name is Kevin Xiao. I thank the Commission and
27 just for your time. I'm a proud resident of Balwyn and
28 North Balwyn. I grew up there. My family came to
29 Australia when I was five and a half and I have been a
30 teacher. I have been a lecturer. I am also heading up a
31 small non-profit organisation. My proposal today is

1 actually very, very simple, which is have Balwyn and
2 Balwyn North absorbed into the federal boundaries of
3 Menzies in the upcoming federal election.

4 As a teacher, if I could my teacher hat on, the way I
5 have described it to my students would be if you think
6 about the Chinese community in 1.4 million that reside
7 in Australia, a big portion of them reside in Melbourne.
8 And if you can think about it as the letter I, with the
9 upper stroke from Balwyn all the way to East Doncaster,
10 the vertical stroke from Doncaster to Mount Waverley, and
11 then the bottom stroke from Chadstone all the way to Glen
12 Waverley. There was an objection No. 155 which actually
13 shows the heat map of the Chinese Australian community
14 very, very accurately.

15 I guess in the interest of the community and for me to
16 advocate and support my community Balwyn and Balwyn North
17 our connection to Menzies, Doncaster, Box Hill, has never
18 been stronger. I grew up there. I went to Balwyn Primary.
19 I went to Balwyn High School and when I started there
20 weren't that many Asian kids but when I finished I
21 remember my year 12 class we had 27 graduates of which
22 five were Caucasian.

23 Now if I ask my classmates, where do you guys go after
24 school, the majority of them would say, we'd head east.
25 We'll go to Doni, Doncaster Shopping Centre, as well as
26 Box Hill. How do I know this? Not just with my community
27 links but in fact last night I asked my students, 'How
28 many of you guys actually live in Balwyn and Balwyn North
29 would travel to other parts of the Kooyong electorate?'

30 I asked them with the new proposed distribution and
31 the boundary, Kooyong is going to take in Toorak. When is

1 the last time I went to Toorak and when is the last time
2 that any of my students will go down to Toorak. The
3 reason why Balwyn and Balwyn North should be absorbed
4 into the Menzies is because our cultural, our schools,
5 our transport, even the way we eat, reflects the border
6 boundaries that Menzies should absorb, Balwyn and Balwyn
7 North.

8 My ability to also advocate and support my community
9 becomes compromised with this. Why? If we split the
10 letter I into three parts where Balwyn is part of
11 Kooyong, East Doncaster, Doncaster is a part of Menzies,
12 with the balance being Mount Waverley, Glen Waverley, as
13 part of Chisholm, we have three separate seats and we
14 need to speak to three separate members for the same
15 issue. In fact I remember when I was speaking to the
16 federal Member for Kooyong about some of the concern that
17 we have. They have to consider Hawthorn. They have to
18 consider Camberwell. They have to consider Surrey Hills
19 and now they have to consider Toorak as well.

20 Where does Balwyn and Balwyn North sit? Where does the
21 Chinese community sit? So my proposal is a very, very
22 simple one. Yes, the Eastern Freeway is considered to be
23 a hard boundary but the reality is I drive across that
24 boundary every second day to visit my auntie who lives in
25 Bulleen and we share more common roots culturally. We go
26 to the same schools. We eat at the same places. In fact
27 at night the other day I took my kids to Box Hill to have
28 some dessert and I say to myself, well, we're actually
29 more integrated with parts of Menzies than we are with
30 parts of Kooyong. That's all I have to say, thank you
31 very much.

1 CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Xiao.

2 MR XIAO: Thank you.

3 CHAIR: The next speaker is Dot Haynes.

4 MS HAYNES: Thank you. I'm not a great speaker, I'm a bit of a
5 doer. So my name is Dorothy Haynes. I am better known as
6 Dot from Doncaster. I intentionally moved to Doncaster 30
7 years ago to raise my children. My commandment is to a
8 cohesive society and neighbourhood is very important to
9 me. Last year I was awarded my OAM because of my
10 commitments to my community and it was a special - it is
11 special to me and my family, as I came from a very poor
12 family and I am the youngest of 10 children without a
13 mother and had an amazing father.

14 So I thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear
15 in person today at this AEC redistribution hearing. My
16 core arguments include a summary of relevant objections.
17 I am not here to repeat my submission which is, in my
18 objection, 157.

19 I believe the AEC has caused far more disruption in
20 Menzies and Deakin than is required with the current
21 relocation. The source of these errors has been a
22 misguided attempt by the AEC to turn Deakin and Menzies
23 into north-south seats instead of east-west seats as they
24 were previously. I am pleased to see that there almost 20
25 submissions agreed with my own diagnosis, including those
26 of major both parties. I could mention all the numbers,
27 but I am certain you've got them there, and there's over
28 20 of them.

29 I believe an east-west Menzies and Deakin ideally is
30 the border, with borders I proposed. They reflect the
31 natural boundaries, demographics and transport links in

1 our area. This is not a radical proposal and reflects a
2 boundary that you have previously adopted. It made sense
3 then and it makes sense now. I have here a map of my
4 proposal, which I hope that you all have looked at quite
5 intently, and as you will see in the illustration, the
6 alignments with the federal, state and local government
7 boundaries, as they have to vary, that's fine, but it
8 does need to be considered of the demographic of those
9 people.

10 CHAIR: Ms Haynes, just for the purposes of the transcript, the
11 map to which you refer is a part of your objection 157,
12 isn't it?

13 MS HAYNES: Yes.

14 CHAIR: Thank you.

15 MS HAYNES: Thank you. So equally important to those core
16 arguments in my submission, and those that support it,
17 make two main arguments for an east-west alignment. Most
18 major transport links in this area of Melbourne are east-
19 west and west to east. These include the bus routes, the
20 Eastern Freeway, the Maroondah Highway, Doncaster Road,
21 the Belgrave Lilydale line and others. Transport links
22 formed this way because they reflect the way that people
23 tend to travel, which is from the outer suburbs into the
24 city. As several objections have been pointed out
25 already, people in this area of Melbourne rarely travel
26 north-south on a regular basis. In David Barker's
27 objection 498 it explains much better than I ever could,
28 so please have a look at that. I deeply reject, with
29 respect, this current proposal.

30 The east-west seats ensure seats represent roughly
31 similar areas. The low density green wedge areas are the

1 centres of Menzies requested by my objection and
2 objections in no. 298, 385 (indistinct) and others.
3 Deakin remains second on suburban areas as it always has
4 been. The north-east Menzies places areas with little in
5 common, and very little traffic between them, in the same
6 electorate. This goes against the stated objectives of
7 the AEC redistribution.

8 Based on short time, I also have a few other practical
9 points to do with when people are staffing the electoral
10 boundaries and polling booths. The staff will have extra
11 unnecessary work to explain to people that they are now
12 in totally different electorates, and with our
13 demographics, I just - and they are still in the same
14 homes, with such a great addition of Box Hill North put
15 into Menzies, is just not practical.

16 And I will not expand on that, based on time, and I
17 look forward to your response to my submission and I
18 thank you again for the opportunity to represent my
19 community, and I thank you Justice Kennedy, your team and
20 Committee for your time.

21 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. It is possible to take
22 Mr Adam Carr at this point. Mr Carr.

23 MR CARR: Good afternoon. My name is Dr Adam Carr. I live in
24 [REDACTED], Southbank. I have lived in what's now
25 Macnamara, formerly Melbourne Ports, for about 40 years.
26 I know the area extremely well and I will confess that I
27 have worked for a number of state and federal MPs over
28 that time, so I've been involved in politics and also in
29 previous redistributions.

30 As you will be aware, there have been two previous
31 attempts made to alter the configuration of

1 Melbourne Ports which, for the last 30 years, has run
2 from the mouth of the Yarra to Caulfield Racecourse. And
3 over that time, those areas have developed a community of
4 interest which they didn't have when Caulfield was first
5 added to the seat. There is now a very strong inner city
6 cosmopolitan multicultural identity that links the
7 components of what's now Macnamara.

8 As you will be aware, there have been two previous
9 redistributions of proposed moving Caulfield back into
10 Higgins, and moving Prahran and South Yarra into, as it
11 was then, Melbourne Ports. There were very strong local
12 objections to those changes, and on both occasions they
13 were reversed in the final version.

14 I was very pleased to see that this redistribution did
15 not revive that proposal, but it's left Macnamara, more
16 or less, as it was, with a few minor changes that
17 Mr Burns referred to earlier. But I now see the Liberal
18 Party proposal has revived the project of putting a large
19 chunk of Prahran and South Yarra into Macnamara, which
20 would disrupt a much larger number of voters than the
21 proposal that you have made, which would only involve the
22 few voters in Windsor and South Yarra. So I think that's
23 a very bad proposal and I hope you reject it.

24 But my main point, as a resident of Southbank, is
25 about the proposal to move Southbank and Fishermans Bend
26 from Macnamara into Melbourne. I think it's very
27 unfortunately that the Division of Melbourne is now going
28 to cross the Yarra, but I accept that that's inevitable.
29 But the proposal to adopt the West Gate Freeway, as the
30 border between Melbourne and Macnamara, really violates
31 community interest and I think violates local sentiment.

1 I live in Southbank. I don't shop in the CBD, I shop
2 in South Melbourne, in Clarendon Street or South
3 Melbourne Market. If I go out to eat I go down
4 Clarendon Street or down St Kilda Road, I don't go into
5 the CBD. These communities, the community that's now
6 Southbank, which was previously part of South Melbourne,
7 and I've looked this up, has been part of that seat since
8 1906. There was a very long tradition of the Yarra being
9 the border between the seats to the north and the seats
10 to the south.

11 Now, you've proposed a crossing of the Yarra east of
12 St Kilda Road, I accept that's inevitable, but the
13 proposal to incorporate parts of Macnamara west of
14 St Kilda Road, where there's no real community of
15 interest between the south bank and the north bank of the
16 Yarra, I think is really objectionable and you should
17 reject it.

18 It's true, of course, that the freeway is the border
19 between the City of Melbourne and the City of
20 Port Phillip. I'd remind you that border was imposed on
21 the community by a previous state government. It was
22 strongly objected to at the time, and I still think, if
23 anything should change, it should be the local government
24 border, but I realise there's nothing you can do about
25 that. But it does not represent a real dividing line
26 within those communities. I walk under that freeway to
27 catch a tram several times a week. The real border is the
28 Yarra, and that's where the border between Macnamara and
29 the division of Melbourne West or St Kilda Road should be
30 located.

31 So I don't think there's any logical case for

1 splitting Macnamara along the line of the freeway, and I
2 think there are very good arguments in terms of community
3 of interest against doing so. So that's all I have to
4 say. I think I'm well under time. So thank you for your
5 time.

6 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. The next speaker is
7 Mr Thomas Minns.

8 MR MINNS: Hello. My name is Thomas Minns and I would like to
9 thank you for this opportunity today. I would like to
10 first emphatically oppose the abolition of Higgins.
11 Higgins has been a seat since 1949 and has been the seat
12 of two Prime Ministers, two Treasurers and named after an
13 Australian whose contributions to our constitution and
14 our democracy were instrumental in lauding Australia into
15 the country that it is today. In retiring names, the name
16 Hotham is a far more suitable candidate than Higgins, as
17 I will touch on later.

18 The current proposal to split Malvern and Malvern East
19 is abjectly wrong. The two suburbs not only share a name
20 but a long history. Both are currently situated within
21 the state seat of Malvern, which has included both
22 suburbs since 1945. They are also located in Stonnington
23 Council since 1994, and before that the Stonnington City
24 Council since 1956. The AEC can surely not consider
25 splitting these two intertwined communities that have
26 been together for the last 168 years.

27 Instead of unity, the AEC has proposed moving parts of
28 this community into Kooyong. I'm not sure if any of the
29 Committee have lived or live in Malvern and Toorak, but
30 other than being considered wealthy, nobody would
31 consider Kew, Hawthorn, Balwyn a community of interest

1 with Stonnington. Furthermore, I would like to reference
2 a statement Mr Josh Burns MP made at the inquiry in 2021.
3 He argued that Dandenong Road was such a large road that
4 it was an absurd proposal for the AEC to consider adding
5 parts of Caulfield to Higgins. Well, if Dandenong Road is
6 such an insurmountable roadblock, then surely the AEC
7 would happily consider the Monash Freeway one as well.

8 In fact doing a deeper analysis of Mr Burns' and the
9 Labor Party's argument, it would reveal an entirely
10 partisan viewpoint on Caulfield. It is very clear to me
11 that a Higgins based on the combined local council of
12 Glen Eira and Stonnington - sorry - provide a very
13 cohesive community of interest. In fact, the 1994
14 restructure of local government areas, it was actually
15 proposed that the City of Malvern and Caulfield merge.

16 Caulfield train station is a major hub of transport
17 for the residents of both local government areas.
18 Caulfield is notable for its significant Jewish
19 population, matching well with Malvern. Caulfield's
20 demographic, density and socioeconomic status also align
21 well with the residents of existing Higgins. On a
22 personal level, I can say that many of my family members
23 attended Caulfield Grammar, regularly meet with friends
24 at Caulfield Park, and spend time at Caulfield
25 Racecourse.

26 I know that the AEC already agrees with this statement
27 as they have on multiple times proposed this union.
28 However, as I mentioned before, Labor needs Caulfield to
29 stay in Macnamara to stop the Greens from winning. That
30 is the only reason they make this argument and have no
31 regard for the actual community. Retaining Higgins, while

1 expanding it into Caulfield and surrounds, gives the
2 Committee a viable alternative map. I do understand that
3 me getting up here today and asking you to save Higgins
4 is not a productive exercise unless I can provide the
5 Committee with a viable and clearer alternative proposal.

6 As I mentioned earlier, the seat of Hotham is, in my
7 view, a much better option for abolition than Higgins.
8 Hotham is based on no local council. It has several
9 different communities of interest that would be better
10 represented in other electorates and it is surrounded by
11 underquota seats. It is also named after
12 Sir Charles Hotham, a colonial area Governor who lived of
13 his life in England and only served as Governor for less
14 than a year. I do not think it is appropriate to abolish
15 the name Higgins while preserving the name of someone who
16 contributed in comparison far less to this country.

17 As you are aware, there was significant community
18 response with nearly 800 objections and comments on
19 objections submitted, the majority of which arguing to
20 keep Higgins. I understand that, historically, these
21 kinds of decisions have not been reversed, but due to
22 community outreach opportunity for alternatives, as well
23 as the fact that the ABS statistics released to the
24 public were incorrect and suggestions and comments on
25 suggestions were not reopened, provide ample
26 justification for the Committee to reconsider its
27 position.

28 To go even further on that point, it would be a great
29 injustice for the AEC to follow through on this proposal
30 without changes as the usual process of public
31 suggestions was not there. I'd like to thank you all for

1 this opportunity to speak to you all today and I hope you
2 truly consider the points I've made.

3 CHAIR: Thank you, thank you very much Mr Minns. The next
4 speaker is the speaker on behalf of the Australian Greens
5 Victoria, Mr Martin Shield.

6 MR SHIELD: Hi. I'm Martin Shield. I would like to acknowledge
7 the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners and pay
8 our respects to elders and any First Nations people here.
9 Thanks for the opportunity to address you. I'll go first
10 to the question of the abolition of Higgins. We were
11 initially disappointed to see Higgins go, but once we had
12 a look at the ABS data, we actually have to concede that
13 clearly it's the most sensible place to abolish, and we
14 kind of mapped SA1 level demographics around the areas,
15 the boundaries that you've proposed, and we found
16 presumably, as the analysis that you did, that the splits
17 actually make a lot of sense, and probably make more
18 sense than the original boundaries.

19 You've got younger and student dominated populations
20 who you are moving into Melbourne which shares that
21 characteristic. You've got older higher income home
22 owners moving into Kooyong, and younger multicultural
23 lower income families moving, you know, the Carnegie
24 section moving into Hotham. So we recognise that it's the
25 best solution there, and certainly support that decision.

26 We wanted to address the ALP submissions in relation
27 to Parkville and North Melbourne next. We strongly object
28 to the idea of those being moved out of Melbourne and
29 into Maribyrnong, and I think if you look at the data
30 again, there's really no logical argument for it. If you
31 look at the concentration of renters, clearly those

1 suburbs have high concentrations of renters which matches
2 the Melbourne electorate and is very different to the
3 Maribyrnong electorate which has low populations.

4 Same for students; there are clearly student, high
5 student population areas in Parkville and
6 North Melbourne, clearly belong with Melbourne which
7 shares that characteristic and not with Maribyrnong which
8 doesn't. You've got housing, the Victorian Federation
9 era, high density housing in those suburbs, which clearly
10 is similar to the other housing in Melbourne and very
11 distinct from Maribyrnong.

12 You've got, yes, the density factor of that housing,
13 you know, North and West Melbourne are a shared
14 community, you've got school catchment zones which
15 reflect that, and the physical boundary of Citylink
16 freeway. So I think it's clear that it would make little
17 sense for those suburbs to move into Maribyrnong.

18 On the northern end, where you're being asked to make
19 the changes, I think it's actually again when we looked
20 at the heat maps at the SA1 level, what you propose makes
21 a lot of sense. And we've heard from the ALP, they've
22 talked to you about Oak Park and Glenroy and they've
23 given you averages for those suburbs and said those
24 suburbs, based on those averages, clearly belong in
25 Wills. But when you look at the SA1 level, clearly those
26 suburbs are split demographically along the
27 Pascoe Vale Road. So you see the higher concentration of
28 Muslim communities to the east of that boundary, which is
29 a shared characteristic with Fawkner, but to the west you
30 see actually populations which are much more similar to
31 Maribyrnong and to Gowanbrae, and other areas like

1 Strathmore. So we hope you will look at that data, and I
2 think that the boundaries that you've proposed make a lot
3 of sense.

4 We also just wanted to comment on the boundaries of
5 Melbourne, again support the decision to cross the river
6 there, and acknowledge that helps to unite public
7 housing. Twenty-seven of the 44 high-rise public housing
8 towers are brought into the Division of Melbourne by
9 making that change. A unification of the LGBTIQ+
10 community with, you know, the South Yarra, Richmond and
11 Fitzroy communities being united that way in Melbourne.
12 And acknowledge Alexandra Parade as a really strong
13 boundary at the north. So I thank you for the opportunity
14 to address you.

15 CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you very much indeed. The next speaker
16 is Mr Corcoran, John Corcoran.

17 MR CORCORAN: I am John Corcoran, an enrolled elector in the
18 Division of Higgins, and I submitted Objection 171.
19 Higgins has a unique distinction of having two members
20 who have served as Prime Ministers and Higgins has also
21 provided two Treasurers, including, via significant
22 margin, Australia's longest serving Treasurers. Higgins
23 should be protected and preserved by all because of the
24 push to retain Higgins is not a partisan cause. Of the 23
25 electoral divisions that were contested in Victoria at
26 the first federal election, only two were named after
27 people, all others having been named after geographical
28 features, places and localities. And of those original
29 divisions that are still in existence without ever being
30 abolished, only one, Flinders, is known for a person.

31 A proud history, societal and cultural development and

1 nation building are best detailed and remembered in the
2 names of those men and women who have significantly
3 contributed. And I do realise that an AEC naming
4 guideline does read as 'In the main, divisions should be
5 named after deceased Australians who have rendered
6 outstanding service to their country'. One such person
7 who meets that criteria is Henry Bournes Higgins. We
8 should not forget that Higgins had been an earlier
9 Federation campaigner alongside Alfred Deakin and Isaac
10 Isaacs, both of whom divisions are also named. But that
11 is not the only reason as to why Higgins should continue
12 to be recognised in our parliament.

13 I appreciate too that another AEC guideline in respect
14 of naming is that 'Every effort should be made to retain
15 the names of original Federation divisions'. I take that
16 as being a measure of commitment by the AEC and its
17 predecessor bodies towards preserving historical links of
18 significant national importance and I note that elsewhere
19 the formerly abolished Federation divisions of Oxley and
20 Riverina were later recreated after some 15 years and
21 nine years respectively. As the Member for Northern
22 Melbourne, Henry Higgins sat with Deakin and Isaacs as
23 foundation members in Australia's first federal
24 parliament. These are important human links between
25 earlier work towards federation and the opening of our
26 federal parliament.

27 During Deakin's second prime ministerial term he
28 nominated Higgins and Isaacs for appointments as Justices
29 of the High Court, with each going onto serve for over
30 20 years. During much of that same term of appointment
31 Higgins also served as president of the Commonwealth

1 Court of Conciliation and Arbitration and it is in that
2 capacity that he is probably most widely remembered.

3 In 1907, Henry Higgins in the famous Harvester case
4 judged a fair and reasonable wage to be seven shillings a
5 day for an unskilled labourer, and that judgment formed
6 the basis of the minimum wage measures which thereafter
7 underpinned Australia's economic development from those
8 earliest Federation days to the present. Henry Higgins,
9 in expressing that judgment in terms of an unskilled
10 labourer, therefore had an immense impact which was
11 shared by all Australians and thus the continuation of
12 the Division of Higgins should be seen by all as a shared
13 recognition of that historic decision. Fair and
14 reasonable are concepts and measures that are now seen to
15 be traditionally embedded in the Australian ethos of a
16 fair go.

17 In my objection I stated that is particularly
18 important that the City of Stonnington being a solid
19 community of interests covering businesses, education,
20 family and sporting interests, should not be divided and
21 spread across five other electorates and that the
22 Stonnington community should continue to be represented
23 through a single member in Canberra.

24 In relation to the reasons, including the size of the
25 other electorates, which underpin my objection and
26 recommendation therein that either Chisholm or Aston are
27 more appropriate for abolition, I have not since then
28 read any other objections or comments which have moved me
29 to change my opinion, and therefore my request remains
30 that the AEC should select either Chisholm or Aston in
31 that preferred order. What I now see as being a huge

1 response has provided me with further hope that the call
2 to retain Higgins may well be successful.

3 In relation to some earlier redistributions that I
4 have briefly looked at, none of those appear to have
5 drawn objections in comparable numbers. I am heartened by
6 the very high number and share of that total which refer
7 to Higgins and more particularly to retaining Higgins. It
8 appears that, of over 800 objections relating to all
9 Victorian redistribution matters, over 630 of those
10 referred to Higgins, either solely or jointly, and in
11 being 78 per cent of the total, that is certainly a
12 massive Higgins related response.

13 Of those objections which refer to only Higgins, and
14 which numbered very nearly 500, I note that these alone
15 account for 61 per cent of the total. I note that in 122
16 comments as lodged, there are further submissions in
17 support of retaining Higgins. In my viewing of all
18 objections and comments, it appears that it is very
19 clear, a very strong call to retain Higgins. I thank the
20 secretariat for the opportunity to speak at this inquiry
21 today.

22 CHAIR: Thank you Mr Corcoran. The next speaker will be
23 Catherine Mao, I think.

24 MS MAO: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me here. I'm here
25 to talk about the proposed - sorry.

26 CHAIR: Catherine, do you mind just stating your name for the
27 record?

28 MS MAO: My name is Catherine Mao and I'm a mother of two. I've
29 worked in corporate, as a corporate executive, now
30 running my own business. Thank you for having me here,
31 and I'm here to address the proposed boundary changes,

1 particularly the inclusion of Balwyn area in the seats of
2 Menzies. I've been - I'm the one and a half generation
3 Chinese Australian generation grew up in the area, went
4 to school in Box Hill, worked in Doncaster, my family
5 doctor is in Doncaster, lived in Balwyn for many years,
6 and I believe that - also my children are educated in the
7 area, that is in Menzies and in Kooyong. So when the
8 proposed changes came out I was a bit surprised that
9 Balwyn wasn't included in the - in the where all the
10 Chinese communities are, because of the demographic
11 connections, the transport and services.

12 Balwyn is really connected to Doncaster and Box Hill
13 by the large Chinese Australian population. As you know
14 it may seem that Box Hill has the most Chinese
15 population, that's not true, because we all live in
16 Balwyn. And because of the new tram, well it shouldn't be
17 new anymore, because it's been there for a long time, the
18 tram that takes us from Balwyn on Whitehorse Road to Box
19 Hill so we all - we're pretty much connected. And also,
20 as I said before, my family doctor is in Doncaster,
21 children go to school in Doncaster, there's Westfield
22 Shopping Centre and also there's the largest green space
23 nearby is Yarra Flat Park.

24 And, also, the traditional feng shui perspective as
25 well. So, Balwyn, Balwyn North, are aligned with the
26 chain of the hills connecting Bulleen and Lower
27 Templestowe. By the way I grew up in Lower Templestowe,
28 which is referred to as the Dragon Head. The people of
29 Balwyn depend on Menzies for healthcare, transportation,
30 recreation, shopping and services. Decisions made in
31 Menzies directly impact the people of Balwyn, also Balwyn

1 North, and therefore they deserve to have a say in these
2 decisions. For this reason alone, Balwyn area should be
3 included in the electorate of Menzies.

4 I would like to use the rest of my time to rebut some
5 arguments against the proposal that have been raised in
6 the comments on the objections as they have not yet been
7 addressed.

8 Comment 111, argues that Balwyn belongs to Kooyong
9 because people travel east-west to Box Hill, not
10 north-south to Doncaster. Well, since Box Hill is the
11 part of Menzies, the actual transport - this actually
12 supports my point, Dr Ryan herself notes that Balwyn
13 residents use Box Hill Central for Mandarin and Cantonese
14 shop services, which is true, and also Shanghainese
15 services as well, because most of people who goes to
16 Box Hill are Shanghainese.

17 I also strongly object Dr Ryan's claim that placing
18 Balwyn in Menzies would divide Italian communities in
19 this area, given that Bulleen contains one of Melbourne's
20 largest, most established Italian communities.

21 Comment 66 by Ben offers several critiques that I'll
22 address. I appreciate his argument that local government
23 should not be split up when possible, however also
24 comment 65 raised the issue in relation to Balwyn North.
25 However, the - it has been made - sorry, I'm just reading
26 my notes. And I need reading glasses.

27 However, the abolishment of Higgins has made the
28 division of Boroondara just as it has resulted in
29 division of Manningham for the first time ever. Given
30 that Boroondara must be divided, Balwyn is the most
31 appropriate area for this as its demographics make it

1 distinct from the rest of Kooyong.

2 I don't have anything much else to say, however I do
3 work in the property industry, I do manage a lot of
4 strata properties. Most of my clients - most of my
5 properties are in the Balwyn area that I manage. From the
6 data that I have, most of my clients are of Chinese
7 speaking background, and that's the reason I believe that
8 Balwyn should be, and Balwyn North, should be included in
9 Menzies. Thank you.

10 CHAIR: Thank you very much Ms Mao. Next speaker is
11 Denny Meadows.

12 MR MEADOWS: Good afternoon. My name is Denny Meadows.

13 VOICE: Use the microphone. No, the other one.

14 MR MEADOWS: Oh that one. Okay. Give me one minute please. I've
15 lived in the electorate of Kooyong in West Hawthorn for,
16 what is it, 43 years or so, and brought up my family
17 there. So I've got a history of what it's like living in
18 the electorate of Kooyong. And what I want to
19 particularly address is the factors in section 66. (3) (b)
20 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act. It's quite clear that
21 the main focus that the proposed redistribution has had
22 is on the numbers, and obviously there is the requirement
23 to confine as much as possible to the numbers.

24 But I submit that there has not been given sufficient
25 due attention to the elements of paragraph (b), although
26 that's been addressed in a general way, in parts of the
27 report, about the proposed redistribution, it hasn't been
28 done in relation to specific electorates, or at least not
29 in relation to Kooyong. And I think there's significant
30 issues to do with community of interests and a local
31 community that need to be taken into account.

1 In my view, local members are most representative
2 where there is a community of interest. And the members
3 of the House of Representatives are there to, one
4 represent their community in Parliament, and two to serve
5 the community and assist the community. And what I mean
6 by a community of interest is not that everyone has the
7 same sort of interest or the same values, but they have
8 the capacity to share their interests, share their
9 values, communicate with each other and in that way form
10 a community.

11 What's important to forming a community is being able
12 to contact other people in the community, to have
13 contacts, incidental contacts, with people as part of
14 your normal life. And that's why, in my submission, I
15 point out the importance of the travel links. I mean
16 first of all what I would say is it is a very unusual
17 idea to jump the Yarra, and just the map itself of the
18 proposal redistribution, looks unusual in the way it
19 jumps it in that diagonal way.

20 And I think it looks far too forced a way to deal with
21 the situation. And I think many people north and south of
22 the Yarra would say that they are very different sorts of
23 communities and values. But, more importantly, they're
24 not communities that are particularly well linked, and
25 that's principally because of the Yarra. The north-south
26 connections from this part of Melbourne are terrible.
27 There are very few north-south connections by car and
28 they're essentially Punt Road and then there's roads like
29 Williams Road, Orrong Road and Kooyong Road, which are
30 around about ways.

31 But what it means is, in my submission, that there is

1 just not the same flow north and south of the Yarra as
2 there is east-west, particularly in Kooyong. And that's
3 exemplified by not only the car traffic, but the public
4 transport. There is very little public transport north-
5 south. There's buses down Punt Road which is getting
6 right out of the electorate. But there are numerous trams
7 and trains that go from east to west across the
8 electorate. So there's the Belgrave Lilydale Alamein
9 train lines and then there's a lot of trams. There's the
10 48, the 109, the 75, the 70. And that is important,
11 because that's how people connect, that's how people
12 speak to each other, that's how they see other.

13 And one example I can give, from my own experience, is
14 in relation to the kids' basketball teams. We never cross
15 the Yarra as part of the basketball competitions. It was
16 always east-west. We might've gone as far as Blackburn,
17 not normally that far, but it was clearly confined there.
18 So those are the sorts of people that you come into
19 contact with, that you talk to, that you form a community
20 of interest in. And it is hard to see how the same
21 community of interest can be developed across the Yarra.
22 That's all I'd like to say. Thanks.

23 CHAIR: Mr Meadows - - -

24 MR MEADOWS: Yes.

25 CHAIR: Thank you so much.

26 MR MEADOWS: Sorry, I didn't pick my microphone up.

27 CHAIR: We heard you well. We heard you very well. Thank you
28 very much indeed.

29 MR MEADOWS: Thank you.

30 CHAIR: The next speaker is Dean Tey.

31 MR TEY: Thank you all for being here today. As a resident of

1 Kooyong I've been closely following the discussions
2 around the proposed - - -

3 VOICE: Can you say your name?

4 MR TEY: My name is Dean Tey. As a resident of Kooyong I've
5 been closely following the discussions around the
6 proposed abolition of Higgins electorate and its
7 redistribution into surrounding areas including Kooyong.
8 I'm here today to express why this proposal is not in the
9 best interests of our community. Kooyong's population is
10 very distinctly different from that of Higgins, as the
11 point that was made previously. Our community is
12 naturally more connected eastwards along tramlines and
13 train lines, it would just appear to make more sense for
14 Kooyong to move eastwards, either towards Menzies or
15 Chisholm, rather than southwards towards Higgins. These
16 areas, such as Menzies and Chisholm, share similar
17 demographics, lifestyles and concerns.

18 As per the previous speakers that have mentioned,
19 Kooyong has a high proportion of Chinese Asian residents.
20 Our community is older and tend to have higher rates of
21 home ownership. This brings specific needs, such as age
22 friendly services and policies that support homeowners.
23 Expanding eastwards where we share more commonalities
24 makes far more sense than expanding southwards towards
25 Higgins which has a very different demographic makeup and
26 set of priorities.

27 So, practically speaking, expanding Kooyong's
28 boundaries southwards would also cross major chokepoints,
29 like traffic routes, train lines and the river. So, these
30 areas are already congested and any more residents from
31 the south would only worsen these issues. Moreover, where

1 would the electorate office actually be situated to
2 effectively serve a population divided by these barriers?
3 It just doesn't make sense to expand in a direction that
4 complicates accessibility and representation.

5 One thing that is really dear to our community is
6 strong participation in our local sporting clubs. Every
7 Saturday morning me and my family enjoy meeting with
8 friends and families from our local primary school at our
9 children's community basketball games. On Sunday mornings
10 over the summer, our boys enjoy playing cricket at
11 various ovals in Kew and Hawthorn. Children's basketball
12 and cricket are just examples of really popular community
13 sports in Kooyong and it's really essential that our
14 local sporting culture is strongly represented and yes,
15 we certainly do travel more eastwards and we never cross
16 the Yarra.

17 Additionally, like many in Kooyong, I shop locally in
18 areas like Camberwell and we eat at cafes and restaurants
19 in Kew and Balwyn. Supporting these small businesses are
20 really vital for our community's economy. The focus on
21 supporting local businesses is a key aspect of life in
22 our community where many of our residents value the
23 connection to their local shops and services. This
24 contrast with Higgins, where the urban landscape is more
25 varied and commercialised, leading to different economic
26 and social priorities.

27 Ultimately, my view is that it is important for our
28 community to be represented in a way that reflects who we
29 are and what we value. Expanding Kooyong eastwards where
30 we share more in common with neighbouring communities
31 makes sense. Expanding southward into Higgins does not. I

1 urge all of you to consider the impact of this proposal
2 on our community. Let's work together to keep Kooyong a
3 strong, cohesive electorate that truly represents us.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR: Thank you very much Mr Tey. The next speaker is
6 Mr Peter Hammond.

7 MR HAMMOND: Good afternoon. My name is Peter Hammond. I'm a
8 resident of Higgins. I migrated to Australia in 1971.
9 Thank you for the opportunity to address your Committee.
10 I appear before you all in my opposition to the abolition
11 of the federal Division of Higgins in Victoria. Politics
12 is the art of the possible. It takes decades and
13 generation of people to create a social and geographical
14 identity. I've resided and worked in Higgins, federal
15 level, Malvern, state level, and Stonnington, local
16 level, for some 40 years and enjoyed it too.

17 Integration of local, state and federal governments is
18 working well so far. Higgins created a community of
19 identities, personal identity, groups, genetics including
20 First Nations. Politics is a contest of ideas. It is to
21 conserve unity, not creating disunity. The Stonnington
22 City and its councillors are passionate about advocating
23 for the best possible outcomes for the city and
24 communities, collaborating with key stakeholders on
25 important projects and policies, stated in August 2024.

26 I'm a Liberal Party member however I do not appear in
27 such capacity. I'm a former candidate with the
28 Stonnington City east ward candidate for the (indistinct)
29 of 2023. Democracy evolved with the Greek city states
30 2,500 years ago. The AEC administrative procedure is
31 divisive. Human dimension has been ignored. The current

1 sitting Member for Higgins stated her disappointment in
2 writing. Abolition of federal seat of Higgins is a denial
3 of democracy. Original Greek word. Disunity creates
4 chaos. The will of the people shall prevail. The AEC,
5 guided by democracy, shall give hope to all the people in
6 the Higgins electorate.

7 The question needing an answer is: are we witnessing
8 another Kafkaesque episode, in reference from
9 Frank Kafka, Hungarian writer. Thank you. I wish you well
10 in your deliberation. Thank you again.

11 CHAIR: Thank you very much Mr Hammond. The next speaker will
12 be Irene Goonan from the Tunstall Traders Association.

13 MS GOONAN: Thank you for the opportunity of presenting today.
14 My name is Irene Goonan and I'm here representing the
15 Tunstall Traders in East Doncaster. There's about
16 75 businesses in Tunstall Square and they're mostly all
17 small businesses privately owned. And I'd like to object
18 to the fact that the AEC's decision to include Donvale
19 and Park Orchards in the electorate of Menzies is a
20 mistake and spoils communities of interest.

21 This decision will cause profound disruption to the
22 representation of these two suburbs. In one decision the
23 AEC has disrupted the green wedge, disrupted the
24 Manningham community and isolated semi-rural Donvale and
25 Park Orchards in suburban Deakin. Never in the history of
26 the electorate of Menzies has any of these three things
27 occurred. And I implore the Committee not to change this
28 now. I believe at least 15 objections have been made to
29 reflect this view.

30 Three points that I'd like to back up my argument
31 with, or my discussion with, is firstly the

1 characteristics of Donvale, Park Orchards are completely
2 different to the electorate of Deakin. As reinforced by
3 several objections, including those of the Park Orchards
4 Sharks Football Club, the Council Square Traders
5 Association and the Park Orchards Rate Payers
6 Association. The common difference raised across these
7 submissions include 10 file, differences in population
8 and density, completely different rule zoning and high
9 levels of greenery.

10 Secondly, as green wedge suburbs, Donvale and
11 Park Orchards form a community of interest with the rest
12 of the green wedge. The green wedge has niche interests
13 and needs common representation to have its voice heard.
14 This is especially important for bushfire and emergency
15 responses as objections by the 160 by the Wonga Park CFA,
16 Captain Aaron Farr, made clear.

17 The third thing I'd like to mention is Manningham's
18 local government area is a cohesive community which
19 benefits from common representation. And I've been
20 fortunate enough to have been on the City of Manningham,
21 so I understand the difficulties in the green wedge and
22 its zoning. And that not in the history has there ever
23 been this not included in Menzies. The council Objection
24 no. 465 explains just how important this is.

25 And I'd also like to mention that the shopping square
26 has a high representation of businesses owned by Asians,
27 that service Asians, which we have a very high population
28 of Asians in the Menzies electorate, and when you look at
29 Deakin, you will see that they don't have very many Asian
30 representatives, or living in their city, and I'd like to
31 say that it is really important to keep communities

1 together. Communities are the backbone of our - really
2 the whole of our society. And if we can make sure that we
3 care about our communities, keep them together and
4 service them well, that's what Tunstall Traders try to
5 do. Thank you.

6 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed Ms Goonan. The next, and I
7 think the last speaker before we take a short break, is
8 Jacquie Blackwell.

9 MS BLACKWELL: I'll use this one actually. Good afternoon. My
10 name is Jacquie Blackwell. Thank you for the opportunity
11 to speak today. I did not actually make a submission to
12 the draft redistribution proposals because at the time I
13 didn't think I actually cared. I did meet Katie Allen out
14 on the campaign trail and once we got talking I realised
15 that I did care because the abolition of my federal
16 electorate Higgins doesn't make sense.

17 Higgins is being split into five and the
18 LGA of Stonnington is being divided into four. I grew up
19 in the seat of Kooyong and that is where my husband and I
20 have purchased our first house. We moved into the seat of
21 Higgins after we'd enrolled our oldest of four children
22 into secondary school over there, and decided we'd get
23 involved in the local kindergartens and primary schools
24 that would be around where she was to go to school.

25 Since that stage, even though I have a twin sister who
26 lives in Kooyong, I very rarely return. There is no
27 natural connection between Higgins and Kooyong because,
28 from my perspective, I'd have to go down Glenferrie Road
29 and go over that train line and I just don't bother. We
30 meet somewhere in the middle.

31 In terms of the seat of Higgins being divided, my

1 children have attended local schools, primary, secondary,
2 and kinder, they play in sporting clubs, primarily the
3 Prahran Junior Football League, they've attended the
4 local hospital of Cabrini, I volunteer in Prahran and in
5 Malvern for various charities, my children swim at
6 Harold Holt and they play in, or have grown up playing
7 in, parks across the electorate.

8 There is no natural reason to divide this area that is
9 very connected into five, because our community, we cross
10 throughout the entire electorate, we shop in Hawksburn,
11 Malvern Central and Chadstone, that's all in the current
12 seat of Higgins. We don't go beyond that. We socialise in
13 the area and the kids spend their time catching trams or
14 trains to their friends' houses and as the people pointed
15 out, that's east west, it is not north south.

16 To fragment this electorate or this LGA, the LGA of
17 Stonnington, doesn't make sense when you have the seat of
18 Hotham nearby that is already divided. And there is no
19 real community of interest. So I question, after having
20 done my reading of other people's submissions, the logic
21 of actually removing or abolishing the seat of Higgins.

22 The seat of Hotham would've been a far better seat to
23 have been abolished. And Hotham could easily have been
24 divided between Goldstein, Hotham and Isaacs. The
25 alterations to the boundaries of Kooyong and to take in
26 Box Hill and then Macnamara to take in Prahran and
27 South Yarra seem far more sensible. And if Higgins was
28 kept to increase those numbers, having heard today,
29 pushing down into Caulfield, would've been a much more
30 natural thing to do and that would also then have better
31 united the Jewish community along those lines because of

1 Caulfield and we have a large population in the area
2 around me as well.

3 So really my submission today is to say that you
4 should not have abolished Higgins. Hotham should've been
5 abolished. And if Higgins was to have been abolished,
6 there was a far better way that you could have done this
7 that would've made more sense instead of shattering it
8 into five where there is no connection. Thank you.

9 CHAIR: Thank you very much. Well we've said we would take a
10 break now and we will for about five minutes.

11 (Short adjournment.)

12 All right. I think it's time to reconvene. May I call on
13 David Jamison AM to speak next?

14 MR JAMISON: Good afternoon. My name is David Jamison. I'm the
15 president of the Ringwood RSL. We welcome the opportunity
16 to talk to you today. The Ringwood RSL is part of a
17 network of community clubs that contribute to, and are
18 integral to, the fabric of the Victorian community. We
19 provide assistance to ex-service personnel but we also
20 provide assistance and support to the local community
21 and, as such, we are an integral part of our local
22 community.

23 We support community based organisations such as
24 bands, local football teams, including Park Orchards I
25 have to say, and sponsor school children with bursaries,
26 as well as hosting informal groups and activities to
27 combat social isolation. These groups mainly come from
28 Ringwood and neighbouring suburbs and we have established
29 a relationship with many local community groups, service
30 and sporting.

31 The proposed boundaries for Deakin we believe

1 appropriately reflect the residences spread of our
2 membership and support base within the Ringwood RSL
3 sub-branch. So we support the proposals you public
4 interest community forward for adjustment of boundaries.
5 As a volunteer organisation with limited resources and
6 finance, we have to rely on the strong relationship with
7 our elected representatives to ensure the best outcomes
8 for our members in interacting with government bodies
9 such the Department of Veteran Affairs and other
10 departments supporting individuals and people.

11 Much of our success has been granted only by having to
12 work with a single federal MP rather than a number of
13 them. We are able to interact with the elected
14 representatives both at state and federal level who have
15 a great understanding of the needs of the electorate, our
16 role within that electorate, the services we provide and
17 the support that we're able to give, particularly to
18 those who are less fortunate than most.

19 We believe Deakin should remain the way you have
20 proposed it to remain. And it's always traditionally
21 been, if you like, oriented around the major suburbs of
22 Ringwood and Croydon. We believe that the inclusion of
23 Park Orchards and Donvale reflect strongly towards the
24 orientation towards Ringwood. And, for example, when the
25 Mitcham RSL closed down, a great proportion of the
26 members of that RSL moved to Ringwood because they had an
27 affinity in that area.

28 We are great believers in the need to strengthen our
29 local communities. There is a battle going on for the
30 social cohesion within the communities in Australia.

31 Anything that we can do to strengthen local communities,

1 to bring them together, to help them work together and
2 live together in harmony is an important aspect that we
3 should adhere to.

4 Nothing that breaks up communities that have
5 affinities together should be allowed to happen. We need
6 to strengthen not weaken our community groupings. And we
7 think this is very important for the children that are
8 coming up in the following generations. The addition of
9 Donvale and Park Orchards naturally, in our opinion,
10 complements the existing boundaries of the electorate
11 and, given the nature of the major commercial sporting
12 and social hub of Ringwood, it's only natural that the
13 adjoining suburbs should belong to a single electorate.
14 Once again, thank you for the opportunity to talk to you
15 and thank you for the work you've done.

16 CHAIR: Thank you Mr Jamison. Thanks very much indeed. Mr David
17 Brous is the next speaker.

18 MR BROUS: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.
19 My name is David Brous. I'm a resident of Malvern East
20 and live in the Division of Higgins. I'm a public policy
21 and evaluation consultant for the last 45 years and I
22 have been a member of various state and commonwealth
23 government and not-for-profit boards and currently a
24 member of the Victorian Public Records Advisory Council.
25 I want to talk about two matters today. The first one is
26 the splitting of the City of Stonnington across five
27 divisions, and the second one is the proposed boundary at
28 Tooronga Road between the Division of Chisholm and the
29 proposed Division of Kooyong.

30 I'd like to support the City of Stonnington's
31 submission to the inquiry, especially its comments about

1 the issues relating to being split across five separate
2 divisions. I was involved in creating the LGA back in
3 1999 when I did work for the Victorian Local Government
4 Board. Local government changes are one in a 100 year
5 changes and they are the bedrock of providing community
6 service support across a whole community and, in the case
7 of Stonnington, it's from the west in Prahran right
8 across to the east in Chadstone. It's a broad area but it
9 is a small municipality and currently it's all located in
10 one division.

11 And by a process of being all located in one division,
12 it's able therefore to have direct interaction with a
13 federal member, it's able to do unitary planning of its
14 services in terms of any submissions it makes to the
15 Commonwealth, and for that matter to the state government
16 in relation to funding. It's also able to make its
17 priority decisions and strategic planning in relation to
18 what types of services it wants where.

19 Splitting the City of Stonnington across five
20 divisions will not only add to its costs of liaison and
21 operation, but will lead to confusion in relation to the
22 prioritisation of services that are funded by
23 Commonwealth government and/or supported by state
24 government across five separate areas with a potential
25 for them to have to deal with members from variety of
26 ideological views ranging from Independent, Green, Labor
27 and Liberal. And therefore, it creates a major impediment
28 to the operation of local communities.

29 I would suggest to you that the best way of dealing
30 with Stonnington and Higgins is to look at the removal
31 from Higgins, if the division is to be abolished, which I

1 don't oppose, the removal from Higgins of those
2 non-Stonnington areas to neighbouring divisions and then
3 consideration of what level of division within
4 Stonnington is required to satisfy the Electoral Act's
5 requirements in terms of the numbers of electors.

6 That would be a fair way because, therefore, that
7 would minimise or potentially minimise the number of
8 divisions across which Stonnington is spread. Spreading
9 it over five divisions is unconscionable. As I said, it
10 creates extra costs and it does in fact destroy levels of
11 community interest and social capital that exist within
12 the Stonnington area at the moment. So that was my
13 suggestion in relation to Stonnington.

14 The second issue is the boundary, proposed boundary at
15 Tooronga Road between the expanded Division of Chisholm
16 and the expanded Division of Kooyong. Tooronga Road is a
17 boundary for the local government electoral area but is
18 not of itself a significant arterial road. Burke Road,
19 which lies somewhat, but not far, to the east of Tooronga
20 Road is a major arterial area.

21 In fact, extends from Dandenong Road, which is the
22 southern boundary of Stonnington, right through to Monash
23 Freeway and beyond. And it seems to me that the boundary
24 at Burke Road would be a much more appropriate boundary
25 to adopt so that that segment between Tooronga Road and
26 Burke Road, from Dandenong Road to the Monash Freeway,
27 would be transferred across to the proposed Division of
28 Kooyong. And this proposal is broadly supported, I
29 understand, by not only the Liberal Party, but also the
30 ALP Member for Chisholm herself in responses, plus other
31 submissions. That area in East Malvern where I live more

1 readily responds to the west of Stonnington. And I thank
2 you for the opportunity to indicate my thoughts to you.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed Mr Brous. Mr Alan Cullen is
5 the next speaker.

6 MR CULLEN: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I'm
7 here in my personal capacity, I made a submission, but as
8 will become clear while I'm speaking personally, I'm very
9 representative of a wide range of views in Higgins. So
10 I'm speaking in relation to the abolition of Higgins and
11 I want to speak on two things. One is the impact it's
12 having on the electors of Higgins of the decisions that
13 you're making. And second, the methodology that you've
14 applied to come to this decision.

15 I and my family have been in Higgins, resident in
16 Higgins, for over 30 years. We're voters there. I've been
17 active politically and I've been involved in all of the
18 elections and I've always been at a polling booth and
19 felt the pulse of all the people there. So a very good
20 feel for how the Higgins electors feel. What I can tell
21 you is that there's a great degree of connectedness
22 across that electorate, which is cherished.

23 What is proposed at the moment by the Commission is,
24 by the stands of the people going to be affected,
25 particularly brutal. You're obliterating Higgins. Not
26 only the electorate, but the name, 75 years of history
27 and the connectedness amongst the people, and we're
28 sending the people off as to five different electorates,
29 in other words you're eviscerating Higgins. Of course it
30 will be felt badly. It's one thing to make a decision on
31 top, it's another how it feels underneath. So I'm just

1 giving you a feel that no matter how well intended it
2 might be to do this, it's got a sort of soviet touch
3 about it.

4 The next thing that I would like to talk about is why
5 are we doing this. The sole reason we are doing this is
6 because of the numbers. And we're getting the numbers
7 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. That's an
8 entity that I greatly respect. However, they don't have a
9 crystal ball, and they're giving us predictions that are
10 four years out, and I don't believe the numbers. And I'll
11 tell you why I don't believe the numbers.

12 We are moving into a post-mercantilist recession in
13 China which is already affecting iron ore, oil and gas.
14 Already the iron ore prices have fallen to \$90 in
15 Western Australia. The dominant industries, creating the
16 employment and the population growth are mining and oil
17 and gas. Once that commodity cycle turns, as it has done
18 a few years ago, we can expect the population to fall. I
19 would be astonished if we were to have the population as
20 projected by the ABS that we're still growing in
21 Western Australia since we've passed peak mining.

22 The next thing is in Higgins. Anyone who drives around
23 Higgins will see tower after tower being constructed.
24 Ninety per cent of the residential approvals are
25 apartments. Who's moving into them? Electors. They're
26 typically two bedrooms. They'll be citizens, they'll be
27 electors, they won't be families with non-citizens and
28 children. I believe greatly underestimated what the
29 population growth will be in Higgins as it densifies
30 rapidly.

31 So I come back to the point that I feel the numbers

1 that have been used to come to these conclusions should
2 have been subjected to some sort of critical scrutiny.
3 What were the assumptions that underlay the
4 Statisticians' numbers? What was the methodology?

5 So finally, may I say that I would like to come back
6 to the impact. If the Committee is going to do this,
7 let's not have five disempowered groups going off. Think
8 through if you might have to reverse this based on what
9 I've said, how you would do it? I would have just fewer
10 segments going to other electorates, and I would be more
11 sensitive to what people will be thinking in Higgins.
12 Thank you for listening to me.

13 CHAIR: Thank you very much Mr Cullen. I understand the next
14 speaker will be the speaker from the Australian Nepalese
15 Multicultural Centre, Mr Gandhi.

16 MR BHATTARAI: Good afternoon everyone. My name is
17 Gandhi Bhattarai. I'm representing Australian Nepalese
18 Multicultural Centre as the President and Advisor for
19 Non-resident Nepalese Association, Nepalese Association
20 of Victoria, Gulmi Samaj Victoria and Royal Western
21 Soccer Club. Thank you for opportunity to voice our
22 concerns regarding the proposed redistributions of the
23 Wills division. I'm here today representing the
24 Australian Nepalese Multicultural Centre and community to
25 oppose the proposed change, which would remove parts of
26 Oak Park and Pascoe Vale from the Division of Wills. For
27 example, Nepalese community in Victoria is emerging, in
28 the last 20 years from less than 1,000 to becoming now
29 more than 40,000 as per our numbers.

30 In the meantime, while working in the community sector
31 as a community leader, we've been struggling to lobbying

1 for community centres, playing field for soccer club, and
2 introduction as a second language in local primary
3 schools. At the moment, we're running around 12 language
4 classes that's funded by the parents, and last year only
5 we were able to register in the Ethnic Languages Schools
6 of Victoria those ones. So while the numbers has grown
7 up, but at the moment these language centres only
8 capturing around 600 students out of 40,000 people
9 approximately and plus, because that is an interested
10 migration happening into Victoria as well.

11 The Nepalese community in Wills has flourished as a
12 cohesive and vibrant group united by shared cultural,
13 linguistic and religious practices. We have created a
14 community hub where our people can connect, support one
15 another and try. This unity is supported by the current
16 boundaries of Wills which naturally encompasses the area
17 where the Nepalese community has concentrated its efforts
18 to build infrastructures such as cultural services,
19 language centres and businesses.

20 For example, I would like to add in a point. We've
21 been working for community organisation, various levels
22 last 10 years of experience is, I don't know about
23 everybody else's, but personal level it's been lobbying
24 rather than working for community, we've been lobbying
25 for the community. And it's comes down to the points
26 where are your clusters are, and at the policy level, and
27 as an emerging community, it's been so challenging and
28 sometimes we feel frustrated.

29 The proposed redistribution will negatively impact the
30 community by dividing it across different electoral
31 divisions. Splitting Glenroy and Oak Park in two would be

1 detrimental to our emerging migrant community, which has
2 worked tirelessly to establish a home and centre
3 belonging in Wills. The new boundaries would separate
4 families, friends and community organisation undermining
5 the support systems we have built over the years of hard
6 work and dedication.

7 I do not believe the proposed changes redistribution
8 adequately considers the community of interest of our
9 Nepalese community. The purpose areas to be added to
10 Wills, Fitzroy North, Coburg North, Princes Hill, are not
11 especially connected to our community, and hence do not
12 offer anything in the way of support and reason for our
13 community. This is not a case of losing some of our
14 community and gaining others. Furthermore, the current
15 configuration of Wills allows our community to centralise
16 advocacy around wide services, such as the schools,
17 healthcare and social organisations, which are tailored
18 to our specific cultural and linguistic needs.

19 The proposed changes would risk disrupting these
20 essential connections leaving many in our community
21 isolated and (indistinct). We've been lobbying and
22 lobbying, and, as a rising community, while our members
23 are working and trying to settle down and working and
24 that sort of thing, but we feel like not - our kids not
25 being able to learn Nepalese language and that sort of,
26 because it's happening so soon it's - becomes feels like
27 a stolen generation, because if last 20 years we wouldn't
28 be able to provide them, we wouldn't be able to teach
29 them Nepali anywhere. So I think the proposed changes
30 would be, yeah, so we would like consider. Thank you for
31 your consideration. Thank you.

1 CHAIR: Thank you very much. The next person is probably
2 Nicole, as I understand there's no-one who is on the list
3 who is present now. So Nicole is going to continue with
4 what she's been doing before and she is reading out
5 Fiona Mowbray and Nina Taylor.

6 MS TAYLOR: Nicole Taylor, National Redistributions Manager,
7 reading out a submission from Fiona Mowbray. 'Thank you
8 for reading out my views on the AEC draft redistribution
9 for 2024. As a long standing resident of Higgins I
10 strongly object to the seat of Higgins being abolished.
11 The Higgins electorate has been the height of our shared
12 history, culture and identity for decades. The proposed
13 abolition of the Higgins electorate and its absorption
14 into surrounding seats is not just an administrative
15 adjustment, it's an act that would undermine our
16 connections as a community.

17 This is a community that has long stood as a beacon of
18 civic engagement. The Higgins electorate has provided us
19 with a platform to express our democratic rights to vote
20 for representatives who truly understand our needs and to
21 advocate for the issues that matter most to us. The
22 proposed redistribution threatens to dilute our voice in
23 federal politics, spreading us thin across multiple
24 electorates that may not share our priorities or
25 understand our unique concerns.

26 The division of our community into different
27 electorates would not just split our streets, it would
28 fracture the connections we've built over decades.
29 Schools, sports teams, local clubs, these are the ties
30 that bind us together. They are more than just
31 facilities, they are the hubs of our social life, the

1 places where friendships are forged and community spirits
2 rise. How will we ensure that our collective interests
3 are represented when our voices are scattered across
4 different electorates each with its own agenda.

5 Higgins has been the seat of some of Australia's most
6 distinguished political figures. It has been home to
7 former Prime Ministers, Harold Holt and John Gorton,
8 leaders who left an indelible mark on our nation's
9 history. This electorate has seen the rise of policies
10 and decisions that have shaped the direction of our
11 country. To abolish Higgins is to erase this significant
12 chapter in our national story. It is to overlook the
13 contributions of those who have served here and to
14 diminish the historical importance of this electorate.

15 There is also potential for confusion and
16 disengagement that could arise from this redistribution,
17 particularly for voters who have long identified with
18 Higgins. This uncertainty could lead to decreased voter
19 turnout and engagement undermining the very democratic
20 principles that this process is supposed to uphold.

21 I understand that electoral redistributions are
22 sometimes necessary to reflect population changes and
23 ensure fair representation. But there must be a way to
24 achieve this without dismantling our community. This is
25 not just about maps and boundaries, it's about people.
26 It's about ensuring that our community continues to have
27 a strong united voice in the political process. It's
28 about preserving the connections that make Higgins more
29 than just a place to live, it's about preserving what
30 makes Higgins a true community. As a resident of South
31 Yarra the prospect of being combined into the Melbourne

1 electorate poses significant challenges, particularly due
2 to the natural and logistical barriers that divide us
3 from the north side of the city.

4 The Yarra River, coupled with a congested commute
5 across the CBD, creates a clear boundary that separates
6 our daily lives from those on the other side. An
7 electorate that straddles this divide, as proposed in the
8 AEC draft for Melbourne to include South Yarra, would
9 lead to a fragmented and disconnected representation. Our
10 community's needs and concerns which are closely tied to
11 the south side's distinct character was being
12 overshadowed by the broader and often different
13 priorities of the northern suburbs.

14 Staying connected to a south side electorate ensures
15 that our voices are heard in a context that understands
16 and aligns with our lived experiences, maintaining the
17 coherence and unity of our representation. It also avoids
18 navigating the congestion of the CBD if we had to travel
19 to the north side of Melbourne to visit our electorate
20 member in their electorate office. There are some days
21 when that can take over an hour even though it's only
22 about 10 Ks away. Thank you for your time. I appreciate
23 the time I've been given to have my voice heard'.

24 CHAIR: Thank you Ms Taylor. Could we ask you to do one more
25 reading, and this time for Nina Taylor MP.

26 MS TAYLOR: So, submission from Nina Taylor MP, Labor Member
27 for Albert Park and, as far as I know, absolutely no
28 relation of mine. Comment on objections OB152, OB235,
29 OB86, OB94, OB95, OB174, OB416, OB448, OB47, OB462,
30 OB482, OB493, OB448, OB503, OB149. 'Dear members of the
31 augmented Electoral Commission for Victoria. I write in

1 response to the public objections that relate to the
2 proposed Division of Macnamara and the proposed Division
3 of Melbourne. I am the Victorian state member for the
4 electorate of Albert Park which (indistinct) entirely in
5 existing and proposed Division of Macnamara. The
6 boundaries of Albert Park orient south of the Yarra
7 River, west of Queens Road and St Kilda Road and along
8 Port Phillip Bay to St Kilda.

9 Prior to being elected as a member of the Victorian
10 Legislative Assembly, I was the member of the Victorian
11 Legislative Council representing the south metropolitan
12 region. I also live locally in Southbank. I welcome the
13 Redistribution Committee's proposal for the proposed
14 Division of Macnamara as an appropriate and accurate
15 reflection of the key community of interest of Albert
16 Park, means of local travel and communication, the
17 physical features of the division and the existing state
18 boundaries of my seat of Albert Park. I understand that
19 the existing Division of Macnamara is under quota and I
20 commend the Commission for the proposed Division of
21 Macnamara which rectifies this issue while causing as
22 little disruption to electors or communities of interest
23 as possible.

24 I wish to comment on several submissions, including by
25 the Liberal Party of Australia (Victoria division) OB398,
26 suggesting transferring electors from the proposed
27 Division of Macnamara in Southbank and Fishermans Bend to
28 the proposed Division of Melbourne with the West Gate
29 Freeway as a boundary. This is an inappropriate and
30 inaccurate representation of our community.

31 These objections propose that Southbank and Fishermans

1 Bend should be transferred to the proposed Division of
2 Melbourne given local government areas. However, this
3 does not consider the clear communities of interest and
4 physical boundaries dividing Southbank and Fishermans
5 Bend from the CBD nor the fact that these communities
6 form my seat of Albert Park. The Redistribution
7 Committee, in complying with their requirements of the
8 Electoral Act, accepts that splitting local government
9 areas or localities may be appropriate where doing so
10 provides for a strong physical boundary and/or a clear
11 community of interest. The West Gate Freeway is a means
12 of travel more broadly within a state, it does not act as
13 a boundary between two communities. There is no evidence
14 that suggests the freeway is the feature of the
15 communities it passes through.

16 Residents of Fishermans Bend and Port Melbourne travel
17 over the West Gate Freeway via Todd Road, Salmon Street
18 and Ingles Street to connect with the local primary and
19 secondary schools, local dining precincts, shopping
20 districts and travel routes. These communities share the
21 same postcode, fall into the same school catchment zones,
22 participate in the same sporting clubs and gather in the
23 same shopping strips and parks. There is no school
24 catchment zone which allows for students in Southbank and
25 Fishermans Bend to attend schools in the CBD. In
26 contrast, they fall into the zones for Port Melbourne and
27 South Melbourne primary schools.

28 The Fishermans Bend framework is Australia's largest
29 urban renewal project and is a long term strategic plan
30 for the development of the locality. This development is
31 backed by the City of Melbourne and the City of

1 Port Phillip, as well as local community groups across
2 Fishermans Bend and Port Melbourne. The framework sets up
3 five precincts in Fishermans Bend, three of those in the
4 City of Port Phillip and two of those in the City of
5 Melbourne, all of which are in the state electorate of
6 Albert Park.

7 Just recently the Allan Labor Government announced
8 changes to the 606 bus route to provide residents of the
9 Fishermans Bend community access to more frequent bus
10 services and better connections to neighbouring suburbs
11 of Albert Park, Middle Park, St Kilda, Elwood, and
12 towards Elsternwick station. The Minister for Education
13 announced just over a month ago that the state government
14 will be building a new primary school on Williamstown
15 Road with the temporary name of Fishermans Bend Primary
16 School.

17 If the Commission were to accept the objections put
18 forward by the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian
19 Division) to transfer Southbank and Fishermans Bend into
20 the proposed Division of Melbourne, the community would
21 be inappropriately divided inconsistent with
22 infrastructure.

23 While some objections suggest that Southbank is an
24 extension of the CBD based purely on proximity Southbank,
25 residents form a distinct community and share much more
26 in common with their neighbours in South Melbourne and
27 Port Melbourne. There are numerous community and efficacy
28 groups I've had the privilege of working with, such as
29 Southbank 3006, whose purpose is to bring together the
30 local community. Residents do not feel connected to the
31 CBD, they are a distinct and united community.

1 The localities of Southbank and Fishermans Bend are
2 divided from the CBD by the Yarra River. While there are
3 bridges to cross the Yarra via foot, to drive from
4 Southbank into the CBD, residents need to travel south
5 onto Princes Highway. It is important to note there are
6 no crossings over the Yarra from WebbBridge down to
7 Fishermans Bend.

8 Lastly, the western boundary of my electorate of
9 Albert Park is along Queens Road and St Kilda Road, which
10 is reflective of the distinct communities on either side.
11 I strongly agree with the Commission that St Kilda Road
12 serves as a clear natural boundary between two distinct
13 communities and means of travel on either side. This case
14 was agreed to and acknowledged by the Victorian Electoral
15 Commission in the 2021 re-division of the state divisions
16 of Albert Park and Prahran. Thank you for the opportunity
17 to provide a comment on the objections and I welcome the
18 proposed Division of Macnamara for the reasons stated
19 above'.

20 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed Ms Taylor. I understand that
21 Mr Richardson will be the next and after him the Iranian
22 Women's Association.

23 MR RICHARDSON: Thank you Madam Commissioner and Commissioners.
24 I won't take up very much of your time. I just - sorry?
25 Hold this one.

26 VOICE: And just say your name - - -

27 MR RICHARDSON: Sorry, my name's Charles Richardson. You have
28 my submission, my comments and my objections in front of
29 you I imagine. I won't bother taking you through all of
30 them, I just wanted to say that I think the Committee has
31 done an excellent job. I think its approach to the task

1 of the redistribution has been generally excellent.

2 And I would particularly, in light of some of the
3 objections received, I should particularly note my
4 agreement with the idea of abolishing the Division of
5 Higgins, moving Melbourne across the Yarra and having the
6 additional electors taken up by Kooyong, Chisholm and
7 Hotham. While I think at the conceptual level the
8 Committee has done a good job, I think there are a number
9 of mistakes in the detail which I've outlined in my
10 objection. I want to just take you through two of those.

11 The first is coincidentally what we've just been hearing
12 about in that last submission, the boundary between
13 Melbourne and McNamara. The Committee proposes to take
14 the boundary down through South Yarra and into some of
15 Prahran crossing the Yarra immediately south of Richmond.

16 To me, that is a much inferior proposal than crossing
17 the Yarra further downstream around Southbank, Fishermens
18 Bend. The numbers are the same. You can get just as many
19 electors out of Southbank, Fishermen's Bend, Port
20 Melbourne, as you can out of South Yarra, but the
21 connections are much better. It's one thing to say that
22 there are big differences between Southbank and the CBD,
23 yes, of course there are, but it's a matter of the
24 relativity having decided that Melbourne is going to
25 cross the Yarra.

26 The question is not is this is ideal. The question is,
27 is this better than the alternative and crossing into
28 South Yarra is a bad alternative because South Yarra is
29 much more detached from the core areas of Melbourne than
30 Southbank, Port Melbourne are.

31 The communications are much better across the river.

1 The local government area crosses the river at that point
2 and it makes it easier than to fit Macnamara into a
3 sensible shape if it doesn't have this big salient coming
4 down into it in the shape of South Yarra. So I would urge
5 the augmented Commission to revise that proposal not to
6 the extent of throwing out the idea but to crossing the
7 Yarra downstream rather than upstream.

8 The second point I wanted to make is about Casey.
9 Casey is too small. Casey needs to gain electors, that's
10 not disputed. The Committee proposes to take them in the
11 north-west by two small annexations, one from the Shire
12 of, sorry, the City of Manningham and one from the City
13 of Nillumbik.

14 Neither of them makes any geographical sense. The
15 Nillumbik area is around Christmas Hills. It connects to
16 Yarra Glen but it connects only by a single road going
17 down, going a steep escarpment. The whole area otherwise
18 obviously looks towards Hurstbridge, Eltham, Kangaroo
19 Ground, all those areas, not to the Yarra Valley. The
20 other one in Wonga Park also is crossing the municipal
21 boundary in a way that has no other geographical
22 justification. It's only been done in order to gain the
23 numbers. Thank you.

24 There is a much better option available. Simply move
25 Casey a little way south. The area around Cockatoo and
26 Gembrook is already part of the Dandenongs. It involves
27 crossing the municipal boundary but does much less
28 violence to community interest and also provides scope
29 for fixing the western boundary of La Trobe which the
30 Committee's proposal is in a somewhat unfortunate place
31 by returning that boundary to its previous location.

1 You get a better La Trobe without having to do
2 violence to the northern end of Casey in the way I've
3 just outlined. It also provides scope for making changes
4 at the western end of La Trobe but it's not necessary to
5 do that. It's a matter of whether you feel that's a good
6 idea or not. Thank you very much for your time. I am
7 happy to answer any questions you might have.

8 CHAIR: That's very helpful, Mr Richardson. I think you managed
9 to our thoughts. Thank you. The next speaker will be from
10 the Iranian Women's Association and after this speaker we
11 will call up Kelvin Thomson.

12 MS HOSSEINI: Good afternoon Justice Kenny and members of the
13 augmented Electoral Commission. Thank you for the
14 opportunity to address the proposed changes to the
15 boundaries of the federal electorate Division of Wills.
16 My name is Nos Hosseini. I am speaking on behalf of the
17 Iranian Women's Association to express our opposition to
18 the proposed redistribution, particularly the removal of
19 suburbs such as Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick West and
20 Glenroy from the electorate of Wills.

21 The Iranian community, which includes both Farsi or
22 Persian and Arabic speaking members, has established
23 itself as a vibrant and cohesive group within these
24 suburbs. We share a deep national and cultural identity
25 that binds us together and over the years our community
26 has grown significantly in areas like Pascoe Vale, Oak
27 Park and Glenroy, allowing us to coordinate our
28 interests, particularly in the political sphere.

29 We believe that the proposed redistribution will
30 negatively impact our community and disrupt the strong
31 bonds that we have developed. These suburbs have long

1 been integral to both the Merri-bek and Wills
2 communities. For many members of our community these
3 areas are not just places of residence, they are homes
4 where our community feel safe, supported and connected.
5 The current configuration of Wills has allowed for the
6 tailored provision of services that meets the unique
7 needs of our community from supporting refugees and
8 migrants to organising events that address issues of
9 concern to both local and federal governments.

10 Our association has played a critical role in
11 fostering social cohesion and harmony within these
12 suburbs. Splitting this culturally similar communities
13 across different electorates will have serious
14 consequences. It will disrupt the social fabric that has
15 taken up years to achieve and weave together diminishing
16 the growth and unity of these groups. The trauma and
17 isolation that many refugees have experienced makes it
18 even more essential to keep these communities intact.

19 Separating these communities into different
20 electorates will not only create artificial divisions but
21 also make it difficult for these groups and communities
22 to access the support that they need. The proposed
23 additions of Carlton North, Princess Hill and Fitzroy
24 North will not assist in our work as a community based
25 organisation.

26 Migrant groups and especially people who come from
27 often unstable and marginal life circumstances congregate
28 together for a sense of belonging and family. To add
29 these suburbs at the expense of parts of others will
30 negatively impact our ability to help people and best
31 service our community.

1 The current border between Wills and the Division of
2 Melbourne which runs along Park Street and Lygon Street
3 is a logical and effective boundary in our view. It
4 separates communities that have distinct needs while
5 keeping those with similar interests united. The proposal
6 to move parts of Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick West
7 and Glenroy into the Maribyrnong electorate, which does
8 not represent a comparable community of interest, is both
9 unnecessary and harmful.

10 These changes proposed by the AEC will fracture our
11 community, making it harder for us to seek the support we
12 need and prevent us from continuing the progress that we
13 have made together. We urge the secretariat to please
14 reconsider this proposal and allow our community to
15 remain united within the Wills electorate.

16 Keeping our community together is not just a matter of
17 geography. It is a matter of preserving the social
18 cohesion, harmony and sense of belonging that we have
19 worked so hard to build, experience and cherish. Thank
20 you so much for your attention and consideration of our
21 proposal.

22 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. Mr Thomson?

23 MR THOMSON: Good afternoon Justice Kenny and members of the
24 augmented Electoral Commission. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to make these comments to you concerning the
26 proposed electoral boundaries for the Division of Wills.
27 By way of personal background - - -

28 MALE VOICE: Mr Thomson, could you just say your name for the
29 record?

30 MR THOMSON: Kelvin Thomson. By way of personal background, I
31 was the federal Member for Wills from 1996 to 2016,

1 second longest serving federal member for this
2 electorate. Prior to that I was Member for Pascoe Vale in
3 the Victorian Parliament from 1988 to 1996 and a
4 councillor the City of Coburg from 1981 to 1988. The
5 areas that I represented were located within the Wills
6 electorate. I was born, grew up in and still live in
7 Pascoe Vale. I attended a local primary school and played
8 sport for local teams.

9 In retirement I have continued to be involved with
10 local organisations such the Coburg Historical Society,
11 the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, which I established
12 and was president of for 30 years, and the Moonee Ponds
13 Creek Litter Clean Up Team, which I am co-convener of. I
14 am the Chair of the Pascoe Vale Sports Club, which
15 includes the Pascoe Vale Football Club and the Pascoe
16 Vale Hadfield Cricket Club. These clubs have a 100 year
17 plus local history. We field many teams of diverse age,
18 ethnicity and gender.

19 Our members, players, families, supporters, coaches
20 are a reflection of the broader communities in Glenroy,
21 Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Coburg and Brunswick. I believe I
22 am well placed to understand community of interest in the
23 Wills electorate.

24 I am particularly concerned about the proposal to move
25 the western boundary of the Wills electorate from the
26 Moonee Ponds Creek to the Pascoe Vale Road. The Moonee
27 Ponds Creek is a modest little waterway but it's been an
28 extremely strong and enduring boundary.

29 It has been the local government boundary for as long
30 as anyone can remember. It's usually been a state and
31 federal electoral boundary and indeed many government

1 agencies and NGOs consider it the dividing line between
2 Melbourne's north and Melbourne's west and use it as a
3 boundary for the purposes of service provision.

4 It is a boundary which separates postcodes, Pascoe
5 Vale Road does not. Putting residents west of Pascoe Vale
6 Road into another electorate would be highly
7 disadvantageous for them as all their community of
8 interest lies to the east.

9 People in these areas come together through sporting
10 clubs like the Pascoe Vale Sports Club. They shop, dine
11 and gather in their own neighbourhoods. They travel east
12 not west to access council and government services. The
13 Pascoe Vale Road boundary is not a natural division
14 whereas the Moonee Ponds Creek is a logical boundary and
15 has been so for many years. The social, economic,
16 linguistic, cultural and geographic characteristics of
17 the communities of Glenroy, Oak Park and Pascoe Vale are
18 quite different from those of Fitzroy North, Carlton
19 North and Princess Hill, as noted by the previous
20 speaker.

21 Paragraphs 102 and 103 of the Commission's report
22 refer, quite correctly in my view, to the need to avoid
23 splitting recognisable communities of interest, limiting
24 the movement of electors from one electorate to another,
25 providing strong boundaries and avoiding splitting local
26 government boundaries. Moving east from Moonee Ponds
27 Creek to Pascoe Vale Road meets none of these objectives.
28 I particularly want to focus on the issue of alignment
29 with local government boundaries.

30 In my experience, nothing creates community of
31 interest as much as local government and its boundaries

1 and, for a federal member of parliament, local work is
2 and should be important. Federal parliament is not all
3 about dealing with great international and national
4 affairs of state. When I was a federal MP, for much of
5 that time there was a strong correlation between the
6 boundaries of Wills and the boundaries of Moreland
7 Council. This was a great advantage for me and my work
8 and I believe it was also an advantage for the Council
9 and for my constituents.

10 There was also a strong correlation between
11 neighbouring electorates and councils, Batman and
12 Darebin, Calwell and Hume, et cetera. Now I realise that
13 councils and federal electorates are not of the same
14 size, so it's just not possible to achieve a perfect
15 alignment between council and federal boundaries. But a
16 lot of the metropolitan councils are close enough in size
17 to federal electorates to make quite a lot of border
18 alignments possible and considerably more alignment than
19 I can see in the draft boundaries. Under the draft
20 proposal, the Member for Wills would be expected to
21 develop relationships with the City of Melbourne, the
22 City of Merri-bek, the City of Moonee Valley and the City
23 of Yarra, and they in turn with the Member.

24 The same applies for the community groups, sporting
25 clubs, senior citizens and the like, many of which are
26 organised on a municipal basis. I urge the Commission to
27 revise its draft boundaries to achieve a greater
28 alignment between federal electorates and council
29 boundaries to maintain the present strong connection
30 between Wills and Merri-bek and in particular to retain
31 the Moonee Ponds Creek as its western boundary and not

1 split the communities of Glenroy, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale
2 and Brunswick. Thank you again for this opportunity.

3 CHAIR: Thank you again, Mr Thomson, that was very helpful.

4 What I think we will do now is take a break because those
5 who say they wish to speak have not yet arrived. We will
6 take a break for 15 minutes.

7 (Short adjournment.)

8 I think the next speaker will be Peter Allaway. Is he
9 here? Thanks, Mr Allaway, if you could state your name
10 before you begin.

11 MR ALLAWAY: Thank you. Peter Allaway. My name is Peter
12 Allaway. Thank you. So apparently can be heard now. I,
13 and many others, have submitted written objections to the
14 proposed abolition of the current Division of Higgins.
15 Based on its place in history and significance of its
16 naming, cohesion and symmetry with local government,
17 et cetera. These objections are being expanded and
18 repeated many times. In this submission I do not pursue
19 those aspects of objection save to say I reserve them and
20 confirm they are proper matters for the consideration of
21 this Committee in its deliberation of whether it is
22 appropriate to abolish Higgins.

23 Victoria faces a mandated reduction of one federal
24 electoral seat from 39 to 38. My issue is which one. If
25 my following submission is correct and accepted, then it
26 will take courage on behalf of your Committee to
27 implement it.

28 My submission relies on the premise that published
29 material of the Australian Electoral Commission and/or
30 this Redistribution Committee concerning the procedures
31 to be followed must have meaning and intent and should be

1 capable of being relied on by a potential objector to
2 have a permitted objection meaningfully considered.

3 The issue of meaningful consideration however,
4 ultimately depends on whether there is capacity within
5 the procedures of this Committee for it to properly
6 consider and evaluate objections to the abolition of
7 Higgins within the framework of that published material.

8 With your leave I seek to tender a series of published
9 material to demonstrate that by reason of the manner in
10 which published procedures have been applied or allowed
11 to occur, I believe the Committee is without the
12 opportunity to perform the procedures and reach the
13 outcome objectives which have been published. The first
14 item is a copy of the *Commonwealth Australian Government*
15 *Gazette* of 31 May 2024 which I have identified with a
16 header marking, 'PGA1'.

17 CHAIR: Have you got one copy?

18 MR ALLAWAY: I have. I have one copy.

19 CHAIR: That's all right. What I suggest you do is hold each of
20 your papers now and when you've got to describe them,
21 talk to them, and when you've got to the end a member of
22 the secretariat will come and collect them and give them
23 to us.

24 MR ALLAWAY: That seems a sensible idea. In point of fact what
25 I might do is, if I could, with the leave of your
26 Committee, address the particular points in the document
27 that I wish to refer to.

28 CHAIR: Yes.

29 MR ALLAWAY: And then perhaps the Committee says, look, it
30 doesn't matter, we know that because they're our
31 documents. However, the Gazette simply calls for the

1 federal, the proposed federal divisions, the Division of
2 Higgins is proposed to be abolished and the
3 Redistribution Committee proposes retiring the name of
4 Higgins following the abolition of the division of
5 Higgins. That's PGA1.

6 PGA2 is a document which is headed, 'Essential
7 information about the Victorian Federal redistribution',
8 and on the back or on the counter page it says, 'Which
9 electoral division will be abolished', and I refer in
10 particular to the expression, 'Individuals and
11 organisations are able to propose which electoral
12 division should be abolished. '

13 Then I wish to present and rely on a document, PGA3,
14 which is entitled, '5 objections to the proposed
15 redistribution', and I quote from the first page there,
16 'Objections may concern one or more proposed federal
17 electoral divisions and may be about which electoral
18 division to abolish. '

19 Now, notwithstanding objections and then instruments
20 can be made about the proposed abolition of the Division
21 of Higgins. I believe there exists a situation that your
22 Committee cannot meaningfully entertain a proposed
23 alternative. From objections or submissions published
24 online, I observe there exists proposals that Hotham be
25 abolished and I can quote some of the references but you
26 will be familiar with them. In that example, it appears
27 to me that for there to be a proper consultative
28 objection process on the issue, Hotham objectors would
29 have to be given an opportunity to contest that
30 alternative proposal.

31 In essence, what I'm putting is there is a lack of

1 procedural fairness to objectors on the issue and indeed
2 your Committee is deprived of any procedural opportunity
3 to consider objections to the abolition of Higgins
4 because the manner in which its processes have been
5 applied or simply work out.

6 There is no opportunity for alternate division to be
7 considered for abolition which is contrary to what is
8 being represented to the public at large and potential
9 collectors, objectors. I urge your Committee to implement
10 steps that remedy that glaring failure and oversight.

11 Thank you for your time.

12 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. Thank you very much indeed,
13 Mr Allaway. Now the next speaker will be Stuart Smith on
14 behalf of the Liberal Party Victoria.

15 MR SMITH: Chair and Commissioners, thank you very much for the
16 opportunity to appear before this inquiry on behalf of
17 the Liberal Party of Australia, Victorian Division. My
18 statement today focuses on areas where we contend that
19 local communities of interest could be better aligned.

20 MR ROGERS: Could you, just for the record, just say your name?

21 MR SMITH: Stuart Smith. Sorry, about that. Yes, Stuart Smith,
22 Liberal Party of Australia, Victorian Division. My
23 statement today focuses on area where we contend local
24 communities of interest could be better aligned within
25 proposed divisions.

26 I start by restating the Liberal Party's opposition to
27 the abolition of Higgins. Division of Higgins for decades
28 has been centred on the Stonnington local government
29 area. Stonnington reflects significant physical
30 boundaries including the Yarra River and Gardiner's Creek
31 and the Punt, Dandenong and Warrigal Roads.

1 It has strong communities of interest reflected by
2 school catchments, shared means of transport, the
3 Frankston rail line and lengthy tram routes along Toorak,
4 Malvern and Dandenong Roads and along High Street. The
5 proposed boundaries fragment this single community across
6 five new divisions.

7 The AEC has consistently sought to unite local
8 government areas where possible across multiple
9 redistributions both in Victoria and interstate. The
10 proposed abolition of Higgins departs from this
11 philosophy and substantially contradicts many of the
12 Commission's previous decisions in other redistributions.

13 We propose that the Division of Hotham instead be
14 abolished. It's already split across five local
15 government areas and this reflects the already defused
16 nature of the Division and its lack of a central
17 community. Should the Commission, however, nonetheless
18 propose to continue with the abolition of Higgins, we
19 seek to make some constructive comments on the specifics
20 of that proposal.

21 With regard to that boundaries of the proposed
22 Divisions of Macnamara and Melbourne, we agree with the
23 Committee's decision to move Melbourne's boundary across
24 the Yarra River. However, as per our objection, we
25 believe that this should occur in the CBD Southbank area,
26 not in the suburb of South Yarra.

27 We encourage the augmented Commission to adopt the
28 proposal raised by a number of objections that the whole
29 suburb of Prahran should be transferred to Macnamara
30 rather than split across divisions. There is also a
31 strong Jewish community which runs through South Yarra,

1 Prahran, Windsor, St Kilda and Caulfield, and that's a
2 very strong community reason to group these communities
3 in one division.

4 Regarding the boundaries of the proposed Division of
5 Kooyong, currently the proposed boundary of Kooyong runs
6 along Tooronga Road to link communities are on Malvern
7 and High Street. We recommend in our objection that Burke
8 Road is a better boundary reflecting a more natural
9 divide between communities of interest and the proposed
10 boundary.

11 We have recommended that the Division of Kooyong
12 transfer Balywn North to Menzies. Given that the
13 Commission has already made the decision to move Menzies
14 more fully across the Eastern Freeway, we think that
15 communities of interest, such as the Chinese, Greek and
16 Italian diasporas, are better served by incorporating
17 Balwyn North into Menzies rather than the current
18 proposal to include Blackburn South and Box Hill in
19 Menzies.

20 Blackburn South and Box Hill are oriented towards
21 communities of interest centred on Glen Waverley, which
22 is in Chisholm. North Balwyn has a significant Chinese
23 community which identifies with, and is closely connected
24 to, Manningham based clubs and shops. This has been
25 outlined in submissions by community groups themselves.

26 For the proposed boundaries of Chisholm, if the
27 Commission does decide to abolish Higgins, we would
28 encourage the Commission to transfer the part of
29 Stonnington LGA currently proposed to move into Hotham
30 rather, instead, propose that it move into Chisholm.

31 Regarding Aston, Deakin and Menzies, we commend the

1 committee on their proposed boundaries for Aston and
2 Deakin and encourage the augmented Commission to adopt
3 them as proposed with one exception. Per our objection,
4 we recommend that the suburb of Burwood East should be
5 entirely located within Chisholm rather than split. We
6 support the proposed boundary between Menzies and Deakin
7 and argue that no change is required. The natural
8 boundaries chosen are sensible and they should not be
9 unpicked.

10 Regarding Menzies, our primary objection is to the
11 proposed boundaries is that the new division runs too far
12 from north to south and in doing so loses a clear sense
13 of community. To address this, we have proposed that the
14 southern boundaries of Menzies be situated no further
15 south than Canterbury Road.

16 Our objection outlines considerable evidence on how
17 shifting the southern border of Menzies north, whilst
18 taking in additional voters around Balwyn North, better
19 reflects the community, especially multiple multicultural
20 groups as I identified earlier. This was supported by
21 many neutral and independent submissions and comments.

22 Some objections have dealt with the proposed transfer
23 of a part of the suburb of Heathmont from Deakin to the
24 Division of Aston. We encourage the Committee to maintain
25 the Aston and Deakin boundaries proposed with a very
26 sensible boundary at Canterbury Road and a Division of
27 Deakin centred on Maroondah Council.

28 We encourage the Commission to reconsider its decision
29 to split the suburb of Mount Eliza in two by transferring
30 part of the suburb from the Division of Dunkley to the
31 Division of Flinders. Mount Eliza has a strong, close

1 knit community which should remain as a part of a single
2 division. We have suggested in our objection one way that
3 this could be achieved, but I have other solutions and
4 just the last point now, I also wish to commend the
5 Committee on maintaining the five rural divisions in
6 Victoria and encourage the augmented Commission to review
7 the Division of Wannon to ensure that it remains properly
8 a rural based division. Thank you.

9 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. The next, we will call on
10 Janelle Howell if we may. Ms Howell, can you state your
11 name before you begin.

12 MS HOWELL: Yes, I will do. Janelle Howell and thank you very
13 much for the opportunity. I stand today to object to the
14 proposed decision by yourselves as a Committee to abolish
15 the Division of Higgins. I am a community minded person
16 and seek to engage and promote community interests and
17 diversity and this is the first time that I have stood in
18 this type of forum. I make some emotive comments and I do
19 so because this is an emotive issue. But I also make some
20 small process notes before outlining my points. Sending
21 an email on a Friday after 10 am setting in place for an
22 inquiry to take place, two business days later would
23 appear to an inexperienced person in this processes as
24 being an underhanded tactic which can only be considered
25 as one but is attempted to railroad interested parties
26 into a foregone conclusion, and I hope that is not the
27 case, by preventing them from being present today to
28 speak.

29 It is a flawed process and an attempt to strongarm the
30 community into removing a piece of their identity which
31 is Higgins. I would strongly recommend that those

1 responsible, which is yourselves, in the decision making
2 role around this process to look to ensure that this is
3 not repeated.

4 Now to my points which I have to give and there's five
5 of them. Actually I think there's six. It doesn't make
6 sense. It doesn't meet your own criteria and it certainly
7 doesn't meet the community criteria. It would split my
8 local community. It would remove ease and ready access to
9 the federal member and presents a heightened risk of
10 disenfranchising nearly 20,000 voters. I would also just
11 reinforce prior submissions that have been made to you in
12 this regard today.

13 So it doesn't make sense. So plainly put removing if
14 you digress with the removal of Higgins it will be the
15 case of ticking some guideline process boxes that make no
16 sense to the everyday person. I mean educated, everyday
17 person cannot see the logic in this, and it will send the
18 community with a personality of vibrancy and
19 connectedness into a pointless chaos. You propose to
20 redistribute my neighbourhood to become a part of the
21 Melbourne division, Division of Melbourne. It doesn't
22 meet the criteria. The change doesn't meet your criteria
23 and it certainly doesn't meet the community criteria.

24 The change doesn't meet your own highly desired
25 criteria of an electoral boundary being readily
26 recognisable. Nor does it meet the criteria you've
27 received as a part of feedback where the boundary should
28 also be - simple, strong, and easily recognisable. The
29 impact on South Yarra residents is that this would not be
30 the case. We are not Melbourne, we are South Yarra and we
31 are Higgins. We are aligned with Stonnington Council and

1 not Melbourne City Council.

2 Chapel Street, as an example, is one easily
3 recognisable location within Higgins. That within the
4 proposal would be split into three different electorates.
5 For the future of Chapel Street and any potential need to
6 consider what is best to reshape and grow Chapel Street
7 and the local community, you may as well note as a part
8 of your decision that it would be a lost cause impacting
9 not only community but small business.

10 Location access to the federal member. We are on one
11 side of the river and Melbourne, and it is on the other
12 side of the river, and just over three kilometres from my
13 local member's office, which is a simple tram ride, walk,
14 or a very short car ride.

15 The Member for Melbourne's office is nearly
16 10 kilometres away on the other side of town through the
17 city with no direct path or usual connection with that
18 area for myself and other residents. It would be a
19 nightmare and something that I just wouldn't do and I
20 can't see others doing it either.

21 It would split up the local community. Think of
22 Higgins as a family unit. We may have different views and
23 tastes, but we are a rich and vibrant community with our
24 distinct identity. Higgins is a recognisable area of
25 community interest and this proposal is designed to smash
26 this apart for no sensible or logical justification.
27 Attending community events that are within walking
28 distance from my home, I've been able to interact with my
29 federal member on countless occasions. No doubt this is
30 because they can easily navigate around the electorate.

31 The risk of disenfranchising voters, you would take

1 away our voice, the voice of Higgins. And you run the
2 risk of disenfranchising the everyday person in Higgins
3 from being able to have a say because there is a high
4 likelihood of losing a connection with our local member
5 and the identity that this would have and an impact on
6 the state as a whole. Thank you.

7 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed, Ms Howell. What we'd like
8 to do now is take two who want to speak again, one is Mr
9 Thomas Minns, so I wonder whether he would come to the
10 lectern now. Thanks, Mr Minns, if you would just state
11 your name before you begin.

12 MR MINNS: My name is Thomas Minns and I was just offered the
13 opportunity to speak again to the Commission. My original
14 statement focused on what would happen if we saved
15 Higgins. I would just like to take a moment to talk about
16 how to improve the boundaries of Chisholm, which is where
17 I live, if the seat of Higgins isn't reinstated.

18 I believe firstly that the Tooronga Road boundary
19 should be moved not east but west to Kooyong. It should
20 include more of the state seat of Malvern because that is
21 a very united community. Glen Iris, Malvern and Malvern
22 East is very intertwined. I have lived there since I was
23 two years old and I know that the facilities that I use,
24 and my family and friends use, are located in that area.

25 Cabrini Hospital, Malvern Primary School, they are all
26 located in that area, and I think that splitting them up
27 would be a massive mistake. I think that Chisholm can -
28 sorry, the part of Kooyong that extends down past Monash,
29 is weird looking and it's a mistake to include into
30 Kooyong.

31 It should be split between Macnamara and Chisholm,

1 that part, rather than having it split five ways. You
2 just have Stonnington split just two ways, with the west
3 part going into Macnamara and the eastern part going into
4 Chisholm. I believe that this will benefit the people in
5 Higgins, ex-Higgins, as they will be less confused about
6 which boundaries they are being put into rather than five
7 different ones. That's all, thank you.

8 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. Next person who we'll call
9 on is Jett Fogarty for the Labor Party.

10 MR FOGARTY: Thank you for the assistance actually of Victorian
11 Labor. With a bit more time I'd just like to again thank
12 you all secretariat for your work on this redistribution.
13 Like not only was it a truncated timeline because of the
14 ABS but also like, you know, over 600 submissions. It's
15 just a body of co-owner works so thank you.

16 Coming from the United States it is very awesome to
17 see a non (indistinct) way of doing redistributions.
18 Anyway, I'll just make two points. The first is that the
19 Victorian Labor Party supports the current values as
20 proposed in the redistribution when it comes to the
21 Division of Dunkley and the Division of Flinders. You
22 were quite right that the only way for the Flinders to
23 grow is rather towards the CBD and so it has to continue
24 down that path. The second point I would make is that the
25 Victorian Labor believes that you were correct in how you
26 have drawn the Division of Macnamara and I just have a
27 few points to raise on that.

28 (1), the number of displaced electors. The AEC
29 proposed transfer of just over 9,000 electors from the
30 locality of Windsor and South Yarra to new electorates,
31 this is a moderate and appropriate proposal which

1 achieves minimal disruption to federal representation. By
2 contrast, the Liberal Party's proposal displaces over
3 27,000 electors from localities of South Yarra, Prahran,
4 Southbank, Fishermens Bend and Melbourne. This is wholly
5 unnecessary and arbitrary.

6 (2), the significance of St Kilda Road as a natural
7 boundary. St Kilda Road is a divided major arterial road
8 that services up to eight driving lanes, including
9 parking lane and bike paths. Transport, eight separate
10 east to west tram routes converging on St Kilda Road,
11 where they converge on St Kilda Road, where they travel
12 north to Melbourne University.

13 It's about South Yarra and Prahran to the east and
14 from bayside suburbs of Albert Park, Middle Park and Port
15 Melbourne to the west, with which they have little in
16 common. South to Toorak, there are no tram and rail
17 routes which connect residents living on the eastern side
18 of St Kilda Road with those living on the western side.
19 To travel from St Kilda to South Yarra, one would need to
20 change trams along St Kilda Road. Where should
21 Melbourne - my next point, where should Melbourne cross
22 the Yarra.

23 Generally, the AEC has rightly sought to avoid letting
24 any electorate cross the Yarra due to its significance as
25 a natural boundary. However, given the abolishment of
26 Higgins, it is broadly agreed the Division of Melbourne
27 must cross the Yarra at some point. The AEC rightly
28 proposes this should occur east of St Kilda Road, thereby
29 uniting the Royal Botanic Gardens with Yarra Park and the
30 Sidney Myer Music Bowl with Rod Laver Arena, AAMI Park
31 and the G.

1 This is accepted in the Liberal proposal, however,
2 instead of extending the boundary of Melbourne to fully
3 encompass the suburb of South Yarra as you propose in the
4 draft boundaries, the Liberty Party proposal certainly
5 suggests that Melbourne should also cross the Yarra at
6 Fishermens Bend in Southbank. In effect, this would
7 arbitrarily shift the entire southern boundary of the
8 Division of Melbourne south of Yarra. This is absurd for
9 a few reasons.

10 First, the West Gate Freeway. The West Gate Freeway
11 serves as a major transit route between the western
12 suburbs, the CBD and the eastern suburbs. It is not a
13 local transit route, has no impact on the suburbs over
14 which it passes, namely Fishermens Bend, South Yarra,
15 Port Melbourne and Southbank. Residents do not cross the
16 West Gate Freeway to get from one side to another, they
17 travel via overpasses and underpasses. It is in no way a
18 physical boundary or barrier between these two areas.

19 Likewise, travelling from one side of the West Gate
20 Freeway yields no noticeable change in scenery, community
21 or demography. For all intents and purposes, Port
22 Melbourne and Fishermens Bend function as one united
23 suburb with common school zones, transfer routes,
24 shopping centres and more.

25 For instance, residents in Fishermens Bend go to the
26 same school as a resident who lives in Port Melbourne as
27 they do they do fall within the school catchment for
28 north of the Yarra. Thus, using the West Gate Freeway as
29 a natural boundary would be entirely arbitrary and
30 disconnect for the physical reality for residents.

31 Toorak Road. Toorak Road is a major inner city

1 shopping strips. Residents on both sides of the road
2 converge on Toorak Road to go about their daily life,
3 including visiting of shops, restaurants, cafes, bars and
4 other facilities.

5 Traffic on Toorak Road is often heavy and slow, around
6 40 kilometres an hour, designated to allow pedestrians to
7 cross the road at all times. Notably, Toorak Road cuts
8 directly through South Yarra Station which is a major
9 transport juncture connecting the Pakenham, Cranbourne,
10 Frankston and Sandringham lines.

11 Next point. The inclusion of Windsor but not Prahran
12 to Macnamara. It is well understood the boundaries of
13 Prahran are somewhat arbitrary, as reflected in its odd L
14 shape. These suburbs are better understood as an
15 amalgamation of three sub-districts, Prahran West west of
16 Williams Road, Prahran East east of Williams Road and
17 Windsor.

18 As the AEC submission reflects, or rather your draft
19 boundaries reflect, the issue to Prahran West, Prahran
20 East and Windsor are distinct and there is nothing to
21 suggest that they have more in common with any other than
22 they do with their neighbours. This is reflected in other
23 boundaries, such as school catchments, which divide
24 Prahran, Windsor - Prahran and Windsor into three
25 sections.

26 Prahran East. Contrary to the Liberal and Green
27 submissions, Prahran East has more in common with
28 Armadale and Toorak than it does with Windsor. Residents
29 in East Prahran congregate around Glenferrie Road, Toorak
30 Village and Malvern Shopping Centre district and are far
31 more likely to use Toorak Station or Armadale Station

1 than Windsor Station when travelling to the CBD or to the
2 eastern suburbs.

3 Prahran West. Contrary to the Liberal Party's
4 submission, Prahran West shares more in common with South
5 Yarra than it shares with Windsor. Residents in Prahran
6 West orient north along Chapel Street and towards Prahran
7 Market on Malvern Road.

8 Windsor. Prior to 2022, the suburb of Windsor was
9 situated within the electorate of Macnamara. In
10 abolishing Higgins and restoring Macnamara's quota, is
11 entirely logical that the residents of Windsor should be
12 returned to Macnamara.

13 Furthermore, a part of Windsor is situated within the
14 City of Port Phillip, the entirety of which remains in
15 Macnamara. Given Windsor's proximity to St Kilda
16 junction, it is highly convenient for residents to travel
17 to St Kilda for their leisure and recreational
18 activities. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIR: Thanks very much indeed, Mr Fogarty. Now I understand
20 that Adam Bandt MP who was to join us online is ready now
21 so we will invite him to join us. Can you hear us,
22 Mr Bandt? Can you hear us?

23 MR BANDT: Yes, I can.

24 CHAIR: Good. All right. Well, I won't waste time. I'll invite
25 you to state your name and then commence your
26 presentation.

27 MR BANDT: Thank you. Adam Bandt and thanks for the opportunity
28 to appear by video from Canberra. I want to speak in
29 defence of the Commission's proposed boundaries for
30 Melbourne, Maribyrnong and Wills and oppose what is
31 Labor's transparently political attempt to alter those

1 boundaries via its last minute submissions.

2 I say never has there been a more transparently
3 clinical attempt to set boundaries down the lines seen in
4 Labor's last minute submissions. Labor's tortured
5 proposal has put North Melbourne in the same electorate
6 as Tullamarine Airport and Sunbury Road. It is patently
7 ridiculous. North Melbourne is an inner city suburb that
8 has been in the federal electorate since 1922. In every
9 other capital city electorate around the country, suburbs
10 like this are in their namesake electorate.

11 Like unless there is a body of water separating them,
12 then the north, south, east and west versions of those
13 suburbs so that stay within the same capital city
14 namesake electorate. And that is the very definition of
15 community of interest and I think the reasons for this
16 are very clear, clearly understood and can be fairly
17 readily apprehended. If you think about the way that
18 those suburbs have grown up and developed over time, the
19 nature of the housing, the very strong connection with
20 the suburb that they are named after, you see the very
21 definition of community of interest.

22 You've got a strong, a large number of organisations,
23 North West Melbourne Association and North West Melbourne
24 Neighbourhood House. The Young Australian people are a
25 group based in the North Melbourne flats. The North
26 Melbourne Chinese Association, the North Melbourne
27 Language and Learning all making strong submissions to
28 the Commission that they are a part of an inner city
29 community.

30 A very strong community of interest. If one considers
31 there's 47 and half per cent of people renting in North

1 Melbourne and that there is, if you think about the
2 structure of the housing, large numbers of properties
3 that are contiguous with other properties.

4 Very few are fully detached properties in the way that
5 you see in suburbs say, for example, in the electorate of
6 Maribyrnong. You can see very readily as a result of
7 history and the strong communities of interest that are
8 built around that why they consider themselves a part of
9 the electorate of Melbourne.

10 The same with Parkville. You have the Parkville
11 Association and the Parkville Gardens Residents
12 Association submitting to you that there is absolutely no
13 justification for splitting them off from the remainder
14 of the suburbs that they are part of - the suburb named
15 after the park and the suburb that is the home of
16 significant Centres of Learning and a bio-medical
17 precinct.

18 Labor's proposal splits them up conversely, and I note
19 that some of them may not have been able to appear today,
20 but they put in strong submissions. Conversely, can I say
21 I think no community association arguing for these
22 suburbs to be put into the electorate of Maribyrnong.

23 Two other points. Labor's last minute proposal splits
24 North and West Melbourne from each other and you see a
25 very strong, just from the names of the associations, the
26 North West Melbourne Association, the North West
27 Melbourne Neighbourhood House.

28 North West Melbourne use those two suburbs, consider
29 themselves very strongly to be together as a part of a
30 community of interest. They are zoned for the same
31 schools. To split them from each other is Labor's last

1 minute proposal attempts to do is utterly without
2 foundation and would be harmful.

3 Similarly, to split the bio-medical precinct. Many of
4 the institutions, which at a time when government have
5 said this is an area that we want to grow, and they are
6 investing in transport lengths to ensure that they stay
7 together.

8 To split them is harmful and again I make the point, I
9 don't see any strong submissions made in favour of
10 putting North Melbourne into this new electorate of
11 Maribyrnong. Something that has never been proposed to
12 date by anyone until this last minute submission.

13 Why is this happening? My view is that you've seen
14 public commentary that Labor thinks that the proposed
15 changes of Wills might disadvantage it. I know that's not
16 a matter that the Commission takes into account, but it
17 does explain, I would submit, why the evidence in support
18 of the proposed and tortured electorates put forward by
19 Labor is so, thick and why there is a very strong and
20 persuasive case for not making the change that Labor
21 propose.

22 So in conclusion, so with respect, the Commission has
23 come up, has the task of abolishing a seat, and obviously
24 making changes consequent on that. What the Commission
25 has proposed is something none of us proposed, and it
26 could be said to be truly independent, and my submission
27 is the Commission should stick with its original
28 proposal.

29 CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Bandt, indeed. That is helpful.

30 MR BANDT: Thank you.

31 CHAIR: Thank you. Now that's it. I think at that point we can

1 say we've heard from everyone so if we can adjourn for
2 the time being. Thank you to those who have come from
3 outside, the secretariat, of which there are quite a few,
4 I think, and thank you for your interest.

5 - - -