



Comment on objections 10

Croydon Historical Society

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The Croydon Historical Society, formed in 1963, welcomes the opportunity to comment on objections to the proposed federal boundaries in Victoria as they relate to Deakin and adjoining electorates. The Croydon Historical Society (CHS) exists to preserve and disseminate the heritage and historical background of Croydon and its surrounds. This is achieved in areas including research, the maintenance of historical records and artefacts and the education of the broader community through its publications and speaker programs. The CHS also provides a museum at the Croydon library which preserves and displays items of historic interest including photographs, documents, artefacts and objects, especially those that are of historic significance.

A major factor in the ongoing success of the Croydon Historical Society in all these areas has been effective Parliamentary representation and accountability especially at the federal level. There has been clarity on who within the Federal Parliament, has responsibility for responding to the needs of the Croydon Historical Society. This would be exceedingly difficult if there is divided Parliamentary representation and a lack of clarity on responsiveness to the needs of community organisations such as the Croydon Historical Society.

In a working democracy there has to be clarity on democratic principles based around representation, responsiveness and accountability. The Labor Party's objection (OB487) to the proposed federal boundaries in Victoria, as they relate to Deakin and adjoining electorates, fails to acknowledge these democratic principles. This also applies to a lack of understanding of the importance of retaining the City of Maroondah within Deakin. The CHS believes the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) should instead retain its current draft proposed boundaries for Deakin.

Representation cannot be narrowly viewed quantitatively by the number of voters within an area to determine electoral boundaries. While the number of voters is an important consideration, there are other forms of representation that need to be considered and it is pleasing that the AEC has considered these other forms of representation in past and the recent electoral redistribution. We are a pluralistic society and there are multiple groups and community organisations within Deakin which work

collaboratively in the governing process with their member of Parliament. This collaboration would be more difficult with the Labor proposal to currently divide existing representation between Deakin, Aston and Menzies.

The Labor Party proposal for the Deakin electorate has serious implications for interdependence and community connectedness for voters. For instance, those residents to the west of Bayswater Road and then the railway line, stay in Deakin but instead of placing everyone else within one other electorate, Mt Dandenong Road is used to divide the rest of what is currently Deakin and two other electorates, Aston and Menzies.

Anybody with any knowledge of the Croydon community would know that the Main Street shops and the Arndale shopping centre should be in the same electorate; Croydon Park and the sporting facilities to the south of Mt Dandenong Road should be in the same electorate; and that those in the Ruskin Park PS school community should be in the same electorate not, arbitrarily divided by Mt Dandenong Road. The Labor Party erroneously proposes a similar carve-up of Ringwood separating those north of the Ringwood by-pass from the rest of the Maroondah community.

We are pleased to see that the Liberal Party and the Greens accept the AEC's proposal for Deakin in the Croydon and Ringwood areas, as do most other contributors. The Labor Party proposal should not be supported by the AEC as it shows a lack of understanding of the workings of parliamentary democracy in a pluralistic society. It would make it difficult to provide representation and accountability for individual voters and for groups and community organisations presently in the Deakin electorate. It would also create difficulties for Members of Parliament, irrespective of their party or independent status, in responding to the needs of community groups such as the Croydon Historical Society.

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President

Croydon Historical Society