



Objection 122

Mitch Fuller

2 pages

17 June 2024

Attention: Redistribution Secretariat
Australian Electoral Commission
Level 6, 150 Lonsdale St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear augmented Electoral Commission members,

Objection to proposed boundaries

I write to lodge an objection to electoral boundaries per the *Proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral divisions* (the **Report**) published by the Redistribution Committee on 31 May 2024.

I more particularly object to the abolition of the Division of Higgins, the Federal electorate in which I live, on the terms set out in Chapter 2 of that Report.

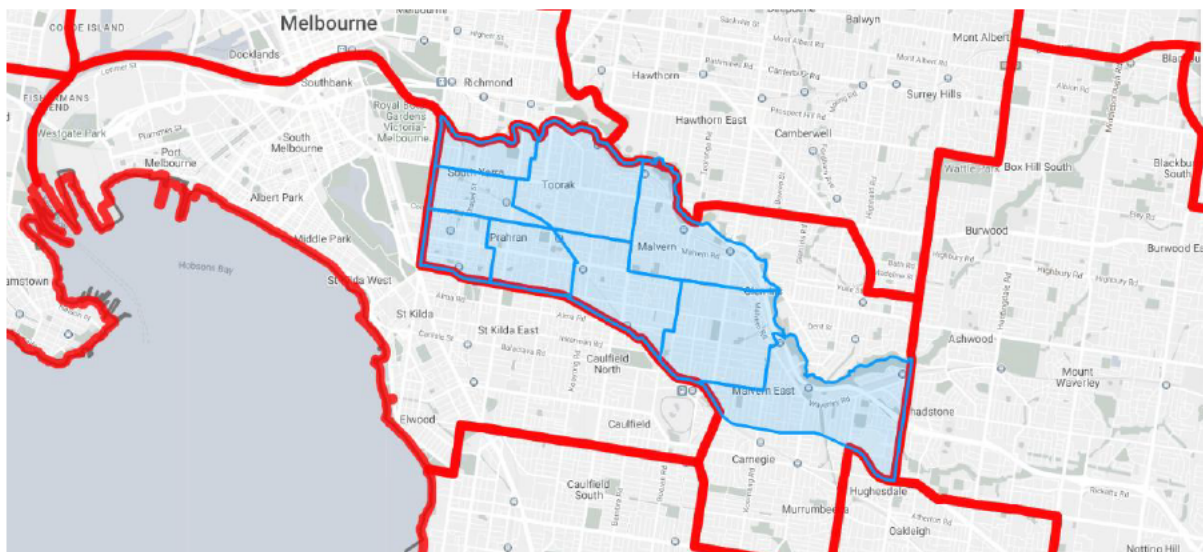
As an elector in the Division of Higgins at present, the Report's plan would see me placed in the Proposed Division of Melbourne following the abolition of the Division of Higgins.

My grounds for objection to the boundaries as proposed by the Report are as follows:

1. Communities of interest

I am 30 years old and live in Prahran, after growing up in Hughesdale and attending Melbourne High School in South Yarra. For me, these areas all form part of one greater community in which I live.

On a political level, there is a deep sense of commonality and community in this area. Take, for instance, the boundaries of the City of Stonnington, which is largely coterminous with the Division of Higgins as it stands:



Even on the state level, the state Districts that are most relevant to Higgins, Prahran and Malvern, were drawn to largely occupy the former City of Prahran and City of Malvern, which were merged to form the City of Stonnington to represent this community.

██████████
██████████

17 June 2024

My personal social circle is largely based in this area – in my spare time, I often visit friends around the corner in South Yarra or a short drive down the Dandenong Highway (or a bike ride down the many trails along the Yarra) to Murrumbeena.

Conversely, I feel no community of interest exists between Prahran residents and residents of, say, Docklands or North Melbourne, whom we will be sharing the Proposed Division of Melbourne with.

2. Physical features and means of communication

As previously mentioned, the Division of Higgins' boundaries as they stand are strong and readily identifiable. The Division is bordered by the Yarra River and the Dandenong Highway, which provide natural northern and southern borders to the community. Furthermore, the Division of Higgins is, as aforementioned, almost entirely coterminous with the Stonnington local government area.

The Proposed Division of Melbourne, on the other hand, would join together communities divided by the Yarra River, the congested CBD, and a number of major highways. There is no strong physical boundary that defines this area, and consequently no community of interest.

A point is made at page 37 of the Report that Melbourne is the only metropolitan division that crosses the Yarra River. Contrary to the position put forward by contributor Yaron Gottlieb, I do not see this as a positive. Greater Melbourne is divided by the Yarra River, not united by it, and any redistribution should seek to recognise and reflect physical boundaries like rivers and highways, rather than joining disparate communities together from across either side of them.

Any numerical advantages gained by this redistribution do not justify splitting up an established local government area based on defined physical boundaries.

3. Significant boundary changes to other Divisions

In my view, the present boundaries of the Division of Melbourne reflect a distinct community of interest centred around the inner-northern suburbs.

The changes will take 20,804 inner-north Melbourne residents into the Proposed Division of Wills, which reaches as far north as Glenroy. It is difficult for me to imagine Fitzroy and Glenroy residents having anything in common beyond the "-roy".

Recommendation

Given the necessity of eliminating a metropolitan Federal Division in Melbourne (likely in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne), I would instead propose that the Division of Hotham be abolished. Hotham has little distinct community character, nor distinct physical features that would guide its boundaries, nor a single local government area that occupies its borders.

For me, it would be a far more reasonable option to place Oakleigh and Chadstone into Higgins, reunite Bentleigh East with Bentleigh in Goldstein, join Noble Park with its neighbour Dandenong in Bruce, and place the large Asian migrant and student populations of Clayton and Springvale into Chisholm.

Thank you for considering my objection – I am happy to provide further commentary upon request.

Yours faithfully,
MITCH FULLER

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted contact information]

[Redacted contact information]