



Objection 160

Aaron Farr

3 pages



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Submission to the AEC – Aaron Farr

To whom it may concern,

I am the Captain of the Wonga Park CFA and Chair of Warrandyte Community Financial Services Pty Ltd (a franchisee of Bendigo Bank), but write this submission in my personal capacity, capacity as a Wonga Park resident, and capacity as a locally based lawyer within Warrandyte.

I note that the AEC draft submission has removed Wonga Park, parts of Donvale, and Park Orchards from the electorate of Menzies. I believe this runs contrary to the communities of interest found in each of these suburbs, and the Green Wedge community of interest as a whole.

Many of the arguments in this submission can also be found in my previous comment on suggestions (25).

Green-Wedge Community of Interest:

Wonga Park CFA is a key community organisation located in Wonga Park, responsible for 24hr firefighting, community safety, and disaster relief.

Wonga Park, Warrandyte, Warrandyte South, Templestowe, Donvale, and Park Orchards form the Green-Wedge community of interest within Manningham City Council. These are all areas of low population density, ranging from 166.4/km² in Wonga Park to 1,154/km² in Templestowe. This density is reflected in council zoning, all of these areas are zoned either Low Density Residential or Rural Conservation Zone Schedule 5 or 4.

A consequence of these zoning rules is that these areas are far greener and more rural than any other nearby suburbs, at least under the Yarra River. They have different service requirements than other types of suburbs, which forms the basis of their community of interest.

I will focus on the emergency service requirements of these areas, given this is my specialty. Due to the common semi-rural, Green Wedge nature



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IN GOOD TIMES AND IN BAD

of the above areas, Wonga Park CFA has been placed within the Greater Warrandyte CFA brigades. These consist primarily of the North Warrandyte, Warrandyte, and South Warrandyte CFAs. Joint activities fundraisers, training, resources, the Manningham Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), and the Manningham Municipal Fire Management Committee (MFMPC). Emergency Management is organised in common across Manningham, and this common community should not be disrupted. Historically, the Member for Menzies as the sole member covering Manningham has been a key part of this line of communication.

Most of these joint activities are organised via Manningham City Council, which I hope demonstrates the strength of the connection between all the suburbs of Manningham. We are one community, and should be represented by one federal member if possible, as I believe the council themselves made clear in submission 59.

To reiterate, the Greater Warrandyte CFA brigades, Menzies, and Manningham have always been synonymous, with great benefit to the community. This has not changed since the last redistribution, and it will not change by the next.

The neighbouring electorate of Deakin consists almost entirely of General and Neighbourhood residential zones, having a denser suburban makeup. For example, Ringwood North, Croydon Hills, and Croydon North have densities 10 times higher than Wonga Park, 5 times higher than Park Orchards, and twice that of Donvale. Green-Wedge areas have no place in Deakin and would be isolated from other Green-Wedge areas in Menzies.

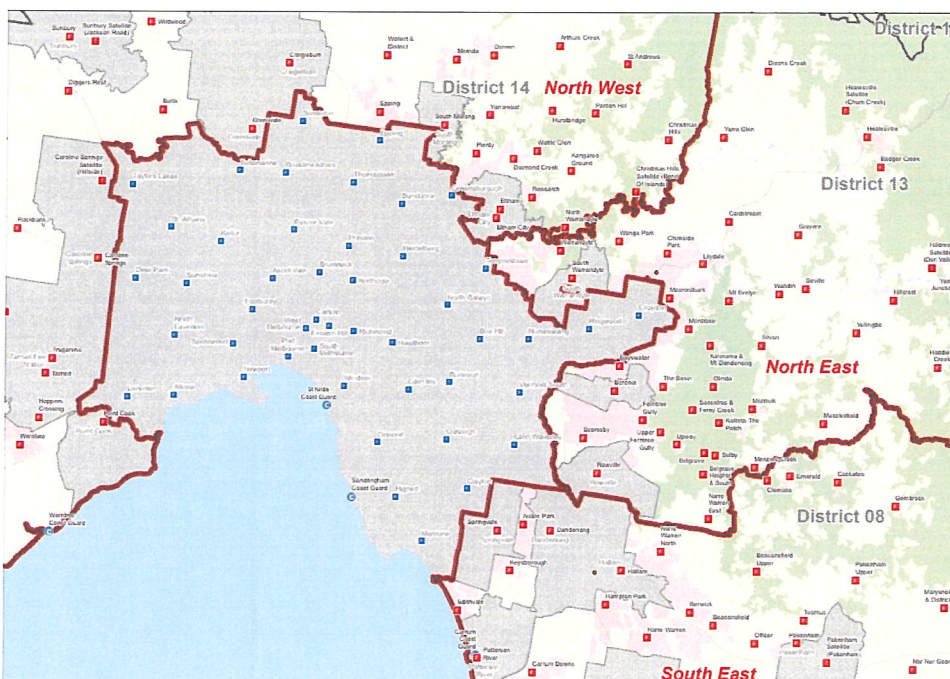
Shifted into Deakin, Park Orchards and parts of Donvale are isolated from other firefighting units with similar geographic characteristics, firefighting needs, and common council and federal representation. They would be the only Bushfire risk areas in Deakin, and the only suburbs with any CFA unit at all in Deakin apart from Warranwood.

This complicates lines of communication. Given these areas are part of Bushfire Risk area, the CFA expects that there is a chance a severe bush fire may affect these areas. If this occurs, the Greater Warrandyte CFA brigades will now need to liaise not with one, but with four separate federal members (Jagajaga, Deakin, Menzies, Casey).

Emergency response depends on smooth communication in high pressure situations with extremely short timelines. Adding three extra commonwealth touchpoints increases the risk of miscommunication and a disjointed response. Bushfires are serious affairs, and miscommunication or conflicting messaging can lead to loss of property, and loss of life. To put it bluntly, the consequences of the AECs decision to place Donvale, Park Orchards, and Wonga Park in Menzies are potentially dangerous.

For these reasons, I strongly implore the committee to retain Wonga Park, Donvale, and Park Orchards within the division of Menzies. Given the historical overlap between this area, Manningham, and Menzies, it would be highly disruptive and contrary to precedent to unite these behind any other seat than Menzies. Having the council offices located so close to the offices of the Member for Menzies (both Doncaster) is an example of that.

This will have the effect of allowing the electorates of Deakin, Menzies, and Aston to conform relatively closely to the boundaries of CFA District 13. As the below map shows, most of Menzies and Deakin are currently within CFA boundaries, while due to their dense suburban nature, the suburbs of Deakin, centred on Croydon and Ringwood, have been excluded from CFA coverage.



I understand that Deakin may need to nonetheless take on other parts of Menzies to balance out its numbers. If this is to be the case, I respectfully suggest Deakin absorb the remaining parts of Blackburn, Blackburn South, and Blackburn North not currently in the electorate. These are heavily suburban areas that match the character of the rest of Deakin and have historically been aligned to Whitehorse and Deakin on other boundaries.

I appreciate the consideration of the committee,

Yours faithfully
RUSH & HAMPSHIRE

[REDACTED]
 Aaron Farr
 Principal Lawyer