



Objection 282

Veneto Club

4 pages

AEC Redistribution Committee Victoria

To whom it may concern,

We thank the Committee for their consideration of this submission, and for the work they do to uphold the functions of our democracy.

The Veneto Club is among Victoria’s largest Italian social clubs. Based in Bulleen, the Club has thousands of members from around Melbourne’s Eastern suburbs. We were founded to uphold the traditions of our Veneti founders (from the specific Venetian region of Italy) but have now grown to include many proud Italians and non-Italians among our ranks.

The Veneto Club was founded as a place for the community to spend time together, enjoy good food and wine, and all the great events that Veneti culture has to offer. Since then, it has grown into a cultural meeting place for not just Veneti but the entire Italian community.

Italians are spread all across the northern suburbs of Melbourne, with two main communities – one focused around the inner north, and the other around Bulleen/Balwyn/Templestowe/Donvale/Park Orchards. We are the focal point for the latter of these two communities. This is illustrated below.

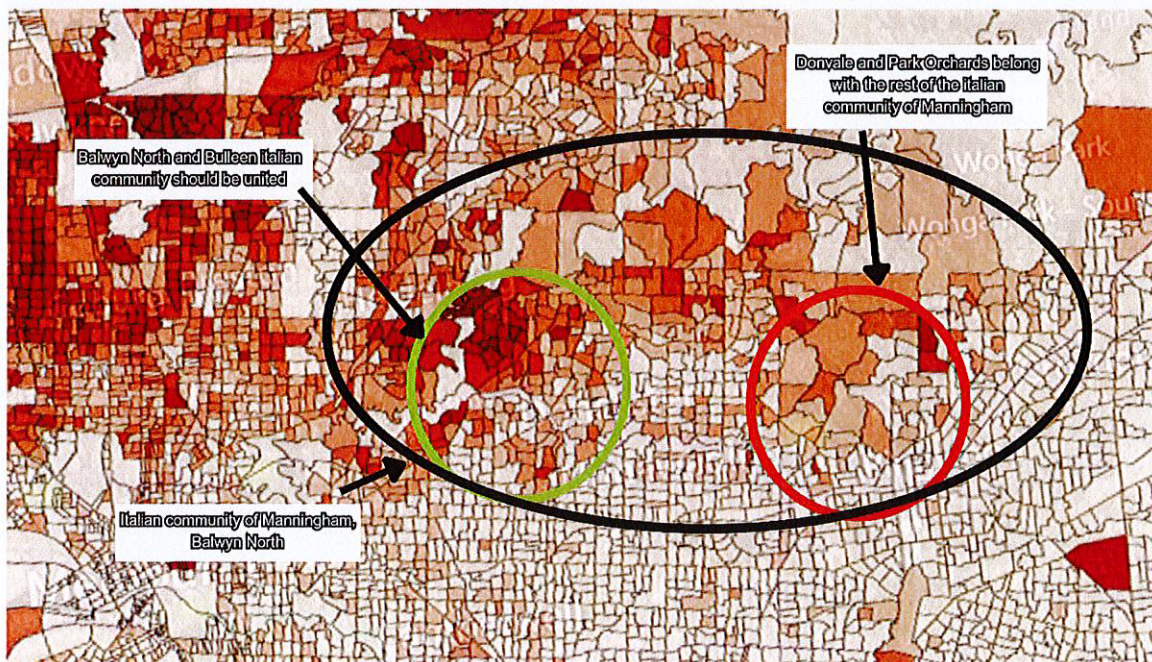


Chart 1: Italian community heatmap of Melbourne, by SA1

The Veneto Club has become more than a service to this community, it has become a community centre and a representative for it. It is where we eat out with our families, where we go for coffee or a drink with our friends, it is where our children play football (what Australians call soccer) and where our ‘nonnos’ play bocce.

It is also an advocate on issues that affect our community, like the North East Link and the Suburban Rail Loop.

It is this representative function that provokes our interest in the redistribution.

This club has two primary points that it wishes to make:

- 1) that the current proposal unnecessarily disrupts the seat of Menzies, and
- 2) the committee should use the opportunity provided to better unite the communities of Balwyn and Balwyn North with the communities of Bulleen and Doncaster, with which they are deeply intertwined.

Issue 1: Disruption of Menzies

Manningham and Menzies have always been synonymous. This has served the entire community well. Our members are found from all over Manningham, and the fact that they have a common federal member has made advocacy and electoral participation much simpler and easier for our community.

It is particularly concerning that Park-Orchards/Donvale has been removed from the electorate of Menzies. These areas are deeply connected to the rest of Manningham. 10% of the area identifies as Italian, and many of our members live in either Park Orchards or Donvale.

While they may be closer to Ringwood, these areas have stronger connections with Doncaster and Bulleen.

This is enabled by strong transport connections, such as Reynolds Road, Stintons Road, Doncaster Road, and of course the Eastern Freeway.

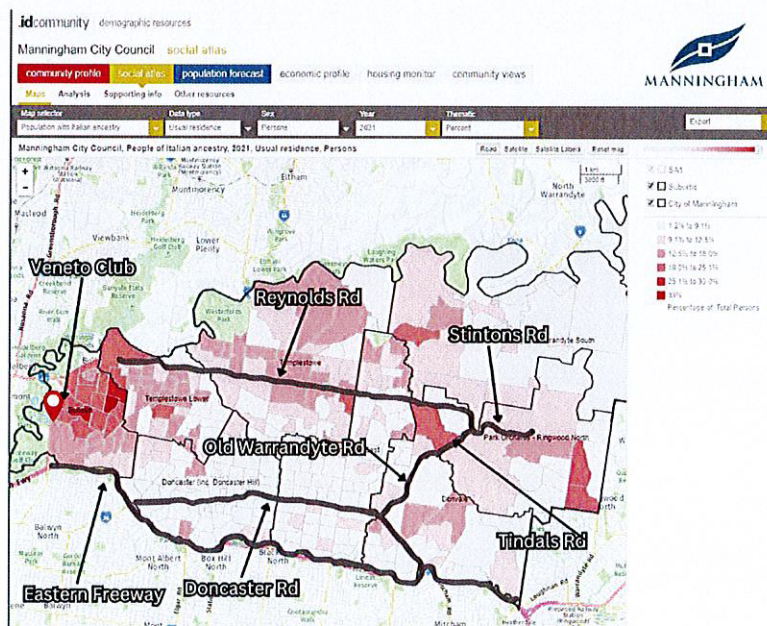


Chart 2: Italian heritage heatmap by SA1, major transport connections overlaid (Manningham) – Note the significant concentration around Park Orchards and Donvale

Issue 2: Balwyn and Balwyn North

Balwyn North and Balwyn have long been deeply connected with Doncaster and Bulleen. This is especially true for Melbourne’s Italian community, one of the world’s largest outside Italy itself. Like Bulleen and Doncaster, Balwyn North contains a significant concentration of Italians. Around 10% of Balwyn North electors are Italian, around double the state average. A significant portion of our members live in Balwyn and Balwyn North, signifying the strength of the Italian community in this area.

Residents of Balwyn North and Balwyn use the eastern freeway to get to work, or Doncaster Park and ride, as do the residents of Doncaster and Bulleen. Bus maps in these areas mostly tend towards Doncaster Park and Ride. Westfield Doncaster and surrounds serves as a hub for shopping, services, dining, and recreation. It is by far the closest activity centre of its size and diversity to the Balwyn/Balwyn North area.

Recreationally, most Balwyn residents play either in clubs based in Menzies, such as the many soccer (football) clubs run by our organisation, or they participate in Balwyn based clubs, which play in the Eastern Football Netball League. This league contains clubs in Doncaster, Doncaster East, Donvale, Warrandyte, and a variety of other locations in Menzies, but no Kooyong based clubs participate.

Beyond organised recreation, the community in Balwyn and Balwyn North uses parks and green spaces in Bulleen for day-to-day outdoor activities. As any glance at a map will show, the closest large public green spaces to Balwyn and Balwyn North are Bulleen Park, the Freeway Public Golf Course, and Yarra flats park, all located in Bulleen. Our club is also located in this area.

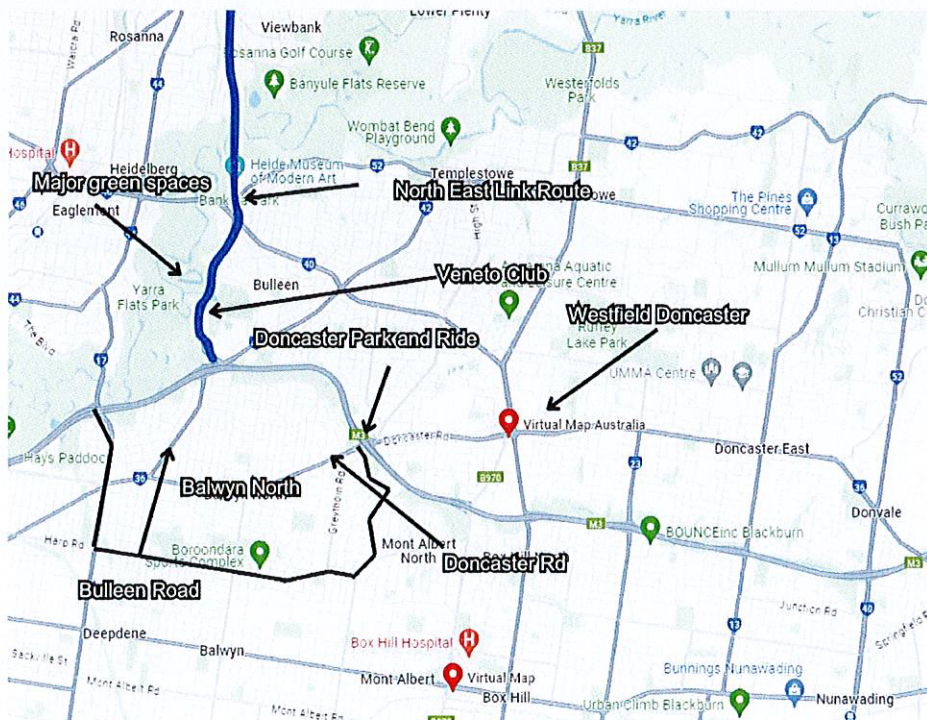


Chart 3: Key connections between Balwyn North and Doncaster on a Map.

The common community links between Doncaster, Bulleen, Balwyn North and Balwyn bring with them common issues (such as North East Link), which we believe merits common representation. As the largest community organisation in the area, the Veneto club has been at hub of advocacy and activism on many of these common issues.

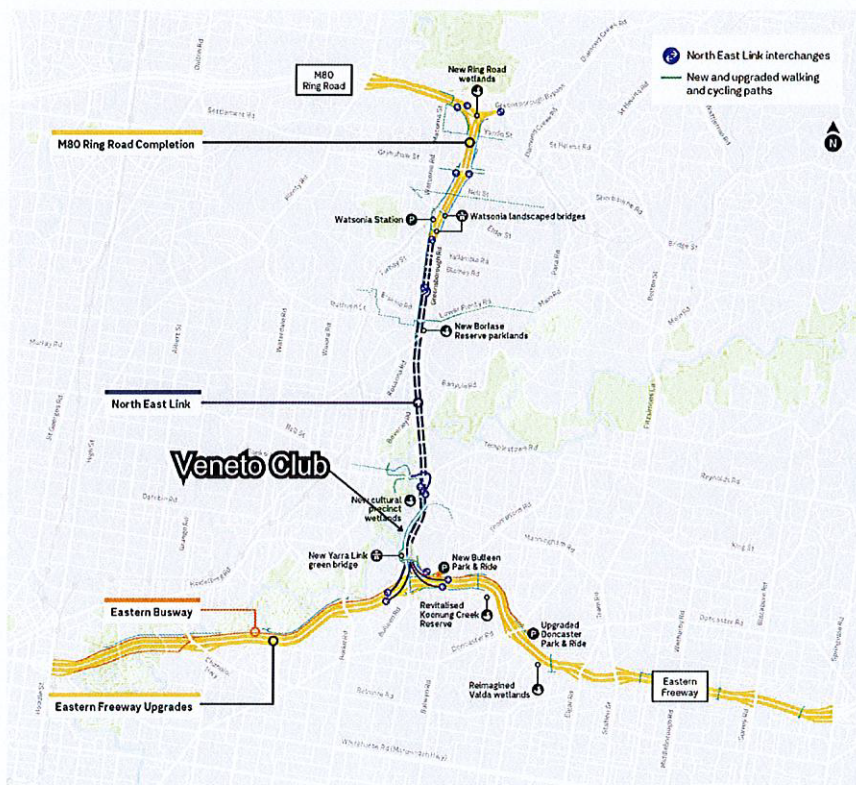
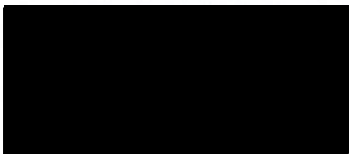


Chart 4: The North-East link and its relation to our club, Balwyn North, and Bulleen

Given Menzies and Kooyong require significant changes to their boundaries, we urge the AEC to consider including Balwyn and Balwyn North in the seat of Menzies, to unite their common community and improve representation for our membership and our community.

Yours sincerely,



Louis Crema

President
 Veneto Club