



# Objection 409

Kurdish Democratic Community Centre of Victoria

2 pages

## Kurdish Democratic Community Center of Victoria

36 Fawkner Rd, Pascoe Vale  
Victoria 3044 Australia  
Tel: +61 3 9379 5679  
Fax: +61 3 9379 5467  
Mobile: [REDACTED]  
Email: kurdsvic@gmail.com



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Dear Redistribution Committee,

We write to you, on behalf of the Kurdish Democratic Community Centre of Victoria (KDCCV) to object to the proposed boundaries of the Federal Electoral Division of Wills, as per the proposed redistribution report released on 31 May 2024.

KDCCV has been providing service to the Kurdish community since 1986. It is a non-profit organization that helps and facilitates the community with Kurdish language, culture, Training in Music, ART, and folklore. KDCCV Fawkner supports Kurdish immigrants and refugees. as well as promotes Kurdish identity and culture. It held regular concerts, seminars, conferences and festivals.

Our Centre supports the current boundaries in Wills as the local area has been a strong community hub that enables us to remain connected through our cultural, language and social needs. Kurdish Democratic Community Centre, strongly opposes the removal of parts of Glenroy, Oak Park, and Pascoe Vale South from the Division of Wills.

The key reasons we, believe that the entirety of the suburbs of Glenroy, Oak Park and Pascoe Vale South should remain in Wills are:

These suburbs have had a longstanding connection to the City of Merri-bek (formerly Moreland) and the federal electorate of Wills. Many people from our centre, are residents in the neighbouring suburbs of Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Hadfield and Glenroy more broadly.

Our community mustn't be divided. Advocating the Federal government for culturally competent services and sufficient funding will be extremely difficult if our community is split into multiple electorate areas. Being within one electorate has helped us establish ourselves as part of the cultural fabric of our community.

Our community continues to grow as do our needs – many of us experience barriers to employment, education, health equity and access to services. As a community of interest, local services (including via Merri-bek council) and Federal services have been curated to the needs of our community, due to our strong presence in the area. Further, when we have

issues of concern, it has been helpful to seek assistance as a collective from one Federal member of Parliament – our needs will continue to be most effectively represented by one elected representative.

Our community also consist of business owners in area, such a Restaurants, Cafes, Electricians, Mechanics, Plumbers, Painters, Builders etc in areas of Glenroy, Fawkner, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale , Coburg and Brunswick. Kurdish communities have become significant within Wills – our community mustn't be split by boundaries or electorates. Our community languages, cultural activities, and festivals hosted within Wills and community have been based in Wills for over 35 years.

Newroz Festival is one of the most important celebrations for Kurds. As the Kurdish community has become established within Wills and Merri-bek, we have been working closely with various stakeholders and government representatives over decades to organise the Newroz Festival, which takes place every year in March in Coburg Lake Reserve. Any boundary changes that will impact the way we seek support or advocate for our needs will devastate our Community and Kurdish people in Victoria.

The sense of belonging, security and connectedness that comes from being part of one suburb and electorate area should not be understated. It has helped us reduce community isolation by building a community hub and staying connected as a community. Removing parts of Glenroy, Oak Park, and Pascoe Vale South from Wills will cut off the shared collective interests we have as a community group and cut off the relationships we have established as a strong collective. The presence of the Kurdish community in Fitzroy North, Carlton North, Princes Hill and west of Moonee Ponds Creek (Maribyrnong division) is limited. We have spent a great deal of time to create a socially connected community within Wills – separating us by splitting off parts of Glenroy, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West would have a negative impact on our migrant community.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to reconsider the proposed boundary changes related to Wills.

Thank you for considering our objections.

Yours sincerely,

Veroz Lales

Co-President

Mahmut Kahraman

Co-President

Kurdish Democratic Community Centre of Victoria