



# Objection 426

Roslyn and Roland Ashby

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Heathmont

27 June 2024

To: The Redistribution Committee of the Australian Electoral Commission

Dear Committee members,

We are writing to strongly oppose to the proposed redistribution of *Deakin* and *Aston* and how it will divide the suburb of Heathmont.

We have lived in Heathmont for 35 years and have strong connections within our neighbourhood. We are currently actively involved with the *Friends of Heathmont Village Green*, a group of residents which has a vision to see the current vacant land at 127B Canterbury Road, in the heart of the shopping precinct, become an open green space for use by the community. It was once destined to be the site of a multi-storey car park, the funding for which has been withdrawn by the current Federal Government.

Whilst we understand that the A.E.C. redraws electoral boundaries as population densities change, it is our view that the impact on the community of any redistribution should be considered and evaluated.

Heathmont, which last year celebrated 100 years since it was given its name, has its own identity and facilities and many residents and groups have developed strong links with the City of Maroondah as its local Council. The proposed redistribution would place a sizeable proportion of residents within the scope of the City of Knox. The strong connections residents have with Council are important in building a sense of community, promoting participation and providing services to both young and old alike. It is the strength of these connections with Maroondah Council, as the key service provider for Heathmont, that is at risk of being considerably weakened. "Two Councils, one suburb" is likely to create confusion and administrative errors and delays. There will likely be different policies and practices between the two Councils affecting residents and organizations seeking to be part of and identifying with an entire community.

The proposed redistribution will also mean our small suburb will have 2 Federal Members of Parliament. This is likely to create confusion and communication issues, when we strive for the best possible representation to enhance our local community as a whole.

The proposed redistribution cuts through the middle of the suburb at its very heart, Canterbury Road. It places shops, businesses, residents, schools, pre-schools, churches, sporting clubs and all manner of community groups on the northern side in the electorate of *Deakin* and those on southern side in *Aston*. Difficulties with communication and connection between "north and south" will likely be created, when there has every effort made to build a sense of an entire community.

Belonging to one electorate not split between two, has been a workable and supportive structure for Heathmont. Thank you for considering our views about the detrimental impact on Heathmont that the proposed changes are likely to bring about.

Yours sincerely, Roslyn and Roland Ashby

