



Comment on suggestion 26

Maroondah Business Group

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Maroondah Business Group (“**MBG**”) welcomes the opportunity to provide Comments on Suggestions received by the Redistribution Committee for Victoria regarding the proposed redistribution of federal electorate boundaries in Victoria.

1. About MBG

MBG was officially established in 2018 after a consolidation of the former Ringwood Chamber of Commerce & Industry (founded in 1947) and Croydon Chamber of Commerce and Industry (founded in 1951) operating within Maroondah. These groups have represented the interests of local businesses for decades through investment attraction and the growth of businesses across Maroondah.

Given the closely interconnected nature of the Ringwood and Croydon communities, the establishment of a single body to represent the interests of local businesses in Maroondah has proved a real success.

MBG represents the interests of our local business members from Croydon, Croydon Hills, Croydon North, Croydon South, Ringwood, Ringwood North, Warranwood, Ringwood East, Park Orchards and Heathmont.

Our vision is to unite the 9000 businesses in Maroondah through a shared purpose of business growth, promotion & sustainability.

MBG supports our members and their businesses at all levels and will deliver a number of outcomes in the immediate to midterm, with consolidation into an ongoing, longer term plan. These will include:

- Support & resources designed for MBG members;
- Health, wellbeing & leadership;
- Capability & Communication.

2. The 2018 Redistribution – successfully uniting communities of interest

MBG believes that the previous Redistribution Committee did a wonderful job in 2018 of meeting the community of interest criteria as it relates to our area. Other than our (ongoing) desire for Warranwood to also be included in the Deakin electorate, the 2018 Redistribution Committee appropriately recognised that important communities of interest in the suburbs which are centred on, and gravitate towards, Ringwood and Croydon.

Indeed, as part of the 2018 redistribution, the two predecessor organisations of the MBG, the Ringwood Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Croydon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, made Comments on Suggestions to the Redistribution Committee at that time.

In particular, the Ringwood Chamber of Commerce & Industry noted the following (in comment on Suggestion 38):

The Chamber represents local businesses across the Ringwood district, including Heathmont, Burnt Bridge, Ringwood North, Ringwood, Ringwood East and part of Warranwood...

and:

Ringwood is a highly important Businesses Community as well as a designated Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC). As a key MAC in Melbourne's outer-east, Ringwood is the focus of significant public and private investment, employment growth and renewal.

The status of Ringwood justifies the entire District cohesively falling within a single Federal electorate.

Some submissions advocate splitting Ringwood in two along Maroondah Highway. In our view, this would be detrimental to the local community and businesses generally, as it would result in disunity rather than the unity of the era.

We at the Ringwood Chamber of Commerce & Industry posit that the Ringwood Traders are a significant community of interest that is best served united within the Deakin electorate.

And the Croydon Chamber of Commerce and Industry (in Comment on Suggestion 36) which stated:

Our members are best represented when situated within a single electoral boundary.

Being located within the one federal electorate will help us develop a better relationship and communication with the federal government, better management of economic investment, better planning and funding and provide stronger grounds for infrastructure projects within the area, such as CCTV cameras for traders.

It will also assist with the co-ordination of projects funded by multiple tiers of government's through Maroondah City Council and the state member for Croydon (both of which include all parts of Croydon within their boundaries).

The location of Chamber members businesses and their customers are entirely spread throughout the Croydon district, which includes Croydon, Croydon Hills, Croydon North, Croydon South and Wonga Park.

In order for our members, customers and the community to receive the best federal representation, our members would be represented by a single federal electorate. The separation of Croydon North, Croydon Hills and Wonga Park from a single electorate artificially separates our community.

The Chamber represents a significant portion of the Croydon community, and we request that these interests be given serious consideration in this redistribution process.

We were therefore pleased with the final outcome of the 2018 redistribution which united Croydon North, Croydon Hills, Ringwood North and parts of Park Orchards with Ringwood and Croydon within the Deakin electorate.

We now believe that the Redistribution Committee has a wonderful opportunity to 'complete the job' and unite Warranwood with the rest of the Maroondah in the Deakin electorate.

3. Support for uniting communities within Maroondah

We strongly support Suggestions to the Redistribution Committee which ensure that the areas centred on Ringwood and Croydon remain in a single seat.

In our efforts to best represent the interests of our members we work closely with Maroondah City Council as well as the State and Federal Government. Our ability to coherently do so with a single Federal representative is critically important.

We therefore strongly support Suggestions S13, S43, S85, S90 and S97 which all appropriately recognise that the communities which cluster around Ringwood and Croydon must remain united in a single electorate.

These Suggestions appropriately manage the numerical requirements of the Redistribution while maintaining the cohesive communities of interest in the Maroondah area following the 2018 Redistribution. We particularly support the Suggestions which seek to unite Warranwood with Ringwood in a single electorate, in this case Deakin.

4. Objections to 'splitting' of Ringwood and Croydon

MBG strenuously opposes Suggestions to the Redistribution Committee which seek to drastically alter the boundaries of the Deakin electorate by effectively 'splitting' Ringwood and Croydon in half. In this respect we oppose Suggestions S24, S31, S34, S70, S99, S100 and S101 which all seem to completely ignore the communities of interest which exist in our area.

Indeed, from our perspective these Suggestions seem to only focus on the numerical requirements of the Redistribution and completely ignore the communities of interest in our area. No other conclusion could be drawn from these proposals which suggest that Box Hill and Kilsyth share a community of interest because they fall on the same train line. This is patently incorrect and obviously disregards the pattern of behaviour of our local community, which naturally centre around Ringwood and Croydon.

For example, we note:

- Retailers based in Croydon (including Main St, Arndale and Eastfield) predominantly draw their customer base from the surrounding suburbs of Croydon North, Croydon Hills, Croydon South, Ringwood East and Warranwood;
- Retailers in Ringwood (including Eastland) predominantly draw their customer base from the surrounding suburbs of Ringwood East, Ringwood North, Warranwood, Croydon, Croydon North, Croydon Hills, Park Orchards and Donvale;
- The owners, staff and customers of the businesses which MBG represents live, work and are connected with our local Maroondah community; and
- Members of MBG are closely linked with local community groups, build close links with service clubs, sporting clubs, schools and charitable organisations which centre on Ringwood and Croydon within the current Deakin electorate.

Therefore, it is our submission that if Suggestions S24, S31, S34, S70, S99, S100 and S101 are adopted, Ringwood and Croydon will be completely detached from the communities which naturally centre on, and gravitate from, them. Sadly, we would then be left with a seat of Deakin which resembles a hybrid federal electorate with seemingly disconnected areas from other electorates.

Accordingly, we reiterate to the Redistribution our support for Suggestions S13, S43, S85, S90 and S97 which offer a persuasive option and appropriate recognition of our local community.

Maroondah Business Group thanks the Redistribution Committee for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Newman
President
Maroondah Business Group