



Comment on suggestion 41

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2 pages

AEC Commentary

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the suggestions for the Victorian federal redistribution.

I was alarmed to read an article in the Weekly Times on the 23rd November: "Australian Electoral Commission: Murray electorate up the creek?"

Upon further investigation I was shocked to read the Liberal Party's submission to the Australian Electoral Commission, number

The Liberal Party's recommendation to move the seat of Murray to cover Sunbury and Craigieburn is perplexing, effectively abolishing the seat.

The Liberal Party then suggest putting Shepparton into McEwen with the seat stretching south to Kilmore and west to Keyneton with communities it shares nothing in common with.

Their submission would see major regional centres of the Goulburn Valley such as Echuca, Stanhope, Rochester, Tongala and Kyabram stripped and placed with Mildura into the Mallee, stretching the seat 500km and 5 hours apart. Numurkah, Nathalia, Yarrawonga, Cobram would be removed to Indi.

The Liberal Party recommendation would see the Goulburn Valley and these strong areas of communities interest split apart.

Murray is a unique rural seat because it contains the Goulburn-Murray irrigation district and is Victoria's fruit bowl.

We have seen what powerful representation can do for this area when in 2014 SPC Ardmona was nearly forced to close and only saved by strong representation from the member for Murray.

In 2010, the Australian Electoral Commission proposed a similar draft which saw the seat of Murray abolished and Shepparton put into the seat of McEwen which stretch south to Melbourne's city edge.

Then it was strongly argued against the breakup of the seat Murray by Goulburn Valley residents, the Liberal Party, the National Party and councils who ran a strong campaign rejecting this proposal and demanding a seat that wholly represented Victoria's fruit bowl and communities of interest around irrigated agriculture in Northern Victoria.

This argument was sound and respected by the AEC so much that they kept the seat of Murray and did another draft of the federal election boundaries.

It would be very hard to believe the AEC would go against what it has already upheld once as a sound argument.

It is bewildering and can only be of self-interest the Liberal Party want to move the seat of Murray to create a new north-west seat for Melbourne, in an area far from the Murray River and Goulburn Valley which it has represented since 1948.

It also defies belief that Shepparton should be placed into a seat stretching to Kilmore and Keyneton, communities so far away we would be fight for funding with communities it shared no common interest with.

I believe that the National Party and Australian Labor Party suggestions of incorporating all of Nagambie and taking in Seymour make the most sense as these are part of the Goulburn Valley and already share services such as health, the areas also play sport together.