



# Objection 28

John Pyke

4 pages

**From:** John Pyke  
**To:** [FedRedistribution - VIC](#)  
**Subject:** General objection to peanut-shaped divisions and specific objection to Macnamara-Higgins boundary  
**Date:** Tuesday, 10 April 2018 8:35:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [Pyke objection Macnamara-Higgins.pdf](#)

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Dear Commissioners,

Here is my objection, the content of which is summarised in the subject line. As noted in the attachment, it is specifically an objection to, and refutation of, the Committee's stated reasons for not adopting the suggestions made by Mr Colebatch and Dr Mulcair as to the boundary.

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Former consultant to NSWEC on compliance of the flow-chart for a new computerised count system with the statutory requirements

## **Objection to Proposed Redistribution of Victorian Federal Electoral Divisions**

### **Specifically, an objection to the boundary between Macnamara and Higgins**

Dear Commissioners,

This is a general objection to the creation of peanut-shaped electorates with a “waist” or a “neck” between two halves, and also a specific objection to the shape of the proposed Division of Macnamara.

### **General remarks about “peanut” electorates and the criteria in s 66**

Over the years I have noticed a number of electorates that are elongated in one direction, and a few that even have a pinch (a “neck” or a “waist”) in the middle between two blobbish shapes, like a peanut. The two that particularly come to mind are Petrie, in Queensland (once an extreme peanut but now more an axe with a handle) and Macnamara, as it exists (as Melbourne Ports) *and* as proposed. Now I know that “as compact a shape as possible” or “not unnecessarily elongated in a particular direction” are not among the criteria in s 66 of your Act, unless you can stretch sub-para (3)(b)(iv), physical features and area, to include it. But I suggest that almost any such electorate has trouble fulfilling criteria (b)(i), community of interests and (b)(ii), means of communication and travel.

As to community of interest, I have always been amazed at the idea that the people of Carseldine and Aspley had any community of interest with those of the Redcliffe peninsula – apart from all being Queenslanders of course. Similarly, as the once-accurately-named Melbourne Ports left Williamstown behind and stretched across to Caulfield, there is little community of interest apart from being Melbourne suburbs. (Maybe they all barrack for the Saints since the Swans flew north? I doubt it!)

As to means of travel (forget communication – we’re all connected now!), well I suppose St Kilda Rd runs through McNamara and the main road and rail to the north touch both the southern and northern parts of Petrie, but the main point of those roads and that railway are to get people from further out into the respective CBDs. I don’t have figures, but I’d be surprised if there is, eg, significantly more daily commuting between Aspley and Redcliffe or between Caulfield and Port Melbourne than between any other pair of randomly-chosen suburbs. Means of travel may justify an elongated electorate in cases where there are long trainlines through the country (like the 3 inland railways in Queensland) but in general we can travel most easily to places that are *close* to us. And, unless there is something exceptional about the local geography/sociology, we have more community of interest with people who live close to us. So, in general, I submit that criteria (b)(i) and (ii) are best satisfied by divisions that are compact, in the sense that they are not significantly longer in one direction than in other directions.

Of course another criterion in s 66 is in (3)(b)(v), the boundaries of existing divisions – you are not expected to start from a complete blank slate every time. But sub-s 3A dictates that you are to treat that criterion as subordinate to the other criteria. As both the divisions I have mentioned have had these odd shapes for some time, it seems to me, with respect, that Redistribution Committees have given too much priority to the existing boundaries, even where they are strange, and not enough to criteria (i) and (ii). The existing boundaries in these two divisions (and any similar ones that I have not noticed) should be given one good shake,

largely ignoring criterion (v); after that the *new* existing boundaries can be given appropriate weight (which is some, but not too much) again.

### **Specific application to Macnamara, and its boundary with Higgins**

Before I say anything specific about boundaries in the Melbourne suburbs, I suppose I should point out that although I now live in Brisbane, I lived for some of my boyhood in Surrey Hills, Canterbury and Hawthorn, caught the train daily from Hawthorn to Prahran for a year and a bit to go to school, and spent many Christmases with the family at an aunt's place in Black Rock. So I do have something of a "feel" for the inner eastern and southeastern suburbs of Melbourne and those long straight roads through them. (Though the newer outer suburbs are a mystery to me; when I stand on a station and see that a train is going to Upfield or South Morang I do tend to think "Where's that? When did that become a suburb?".)

Having said that to "qualify" myself, I suggest that you could adjust the boundary between Macnamara and Higgins so that both of them score much higher on the community of interest and means of travel criteria. The obvious boundary has already been suggested in submissions S19 and S25 by Tim Colebatch and Dr Mark Mulcair – a north-south line running down Williams Road and Hotham Street. The Committee saw merit in that but rejected it on the ground that "Dandenong Road and the Caulfield Racecourse act as barriers between the communities in the Caulfield and Malvern areas". In so far as this is truly an objection rather than yet another submission, it is an objection to the summary dismissal of that very sensible suggestion, and to the Committee's reasoning.

Dandenong Road may look like something of a physical barrier, but that in itself gives the people of the two suburbs a community of interest – they are affected by its noise and pollution. And it's not an impenetrable barrier – there are pedestrian crossings across it and along the Armadale stretch people from both sides of the road catch the tram that runs along it. Further east, where the train line runs parallel to the road, the Malvern station serves people from both Malvern and Caulfield North, and the Caulfield station serves Caulfield North, Malvern and Malvern East. Caulfield and Malvern are *tied together* by the Highway and the railway line as much as they are separated by them. In fact Dandenong Road is much less of a barrier than the Monash Freeway and Gardiner's Creek, and yet the Commission has seen no problem, for quite some time, in lumping Glen Iris and Ashburton with Malvern and Armadale, all into Higgins.

Putting Caulfield in the same division as Armadale and Malvern, and Prahran in the same division as Windsor and St Kilda, just makes so much more sense than separating them – intuitively and by application of the criteria. And it would reduce the east-west dimension of both these oddly-shaped electorates – as I said above, not a criterion in itself, but something related to both the community of interest and "communication and travel" criteria. I recommend that you belatedly adopt the suggestions of Mr Colebatch and Dr Mulcair. (This is on the assumption that they did some sums and that the populations of the two divisions, now and at the projection date, are close to equal. If not, the location of the boundary may need some adjustment, but it should be a roughly straight, north-south line.)

With best regards  
John Pyke  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2018

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