



# Objection 369

The Nationals - Victoria

2 pages

Redistribution Committee for Victoria  
Australian Electoral Commission  
Level 1, Urban Workshop  
50 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne 3000

Dear Sirs

The Nationals – Victoria thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide written objections on the proposed redistribution of Federal Electorate Boundaries in Victoria.

We acknowledge the challenges faced by the Committee in ensuring that Victorians are appropriately represented in Federal Parliament and commend your work in balancing the competing needs of different communities around the state.

We are broadly supportive of the proposed redistribution and make the following suggestions to enhance the proposal.

### **Proposed Division of Mallee**

The Nationals note that the Division of Mallee is currently projected to be under quota and therefore agree with the transfer of Loddon Shire Council from the Divisions of Murray and Bendigo.

We do however object to the proposal to transfer Central Goldfields Shire Council and the northern parts of the Pyrenees Shire from the Division of Wannon into Mallee, at the expense of the south-western parts of the Northern Grampians Shire Council.

The locality of Stawell has changed electorate at every federal redistribution of Victorian electorates since 1968<sup>1</sup>, except on one occasion (1994). We consider that it is reasonable to argue that Stawell has been disproportionately impacted by the constantly changing federal electoral boundaries in Western Victoria and that a period of continuity (by remaining in Mallee) would be justified. Northern Grampians Shire Council have indicated that they would prefer their Shire to remain wholly in Mallee as they identify with the north of the State.

Central Goldfields Shire has also had to deal with being moved around in the 2008 redistribution (Bendigo to Wannon). Being the most socioeconomically disadvantaged municipality in Victoria we believe it would be unfair to expect constituents to travel to Mildura to meet with their local representative.

To offset this proposed change, and to allow the proposed Division of Mallee to remain within quota, we suggest (as proposed in our original submission) that the boundary of Mallee would move south to incorporate parts of the Southern Grampians and Glenelg SAs. The towns of Casterton, Coleraine and Dunkeld, and the entirety of the Grampians National Park would fall into Mallee.

### **Proposed Division of Nicholls (existing Division of Murray)**

Ideally the splitting of shire councils should be minimised. We accept the logic of transferring the remainder of Moira Shire Council from the Division of Indi.

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<sup>1</sup> 1968 – Wimmera; 1977- Wannon; 1984 – Bendigo; 1989- Ballarat; 1994 – Ballarat; 2003- Wannon; 2010 – Mallee; 2018 (proposed)- Wannon

However, we therefore object to the proposed transfer of the eastern part of Strathbogie Shire Council to the Division of Indi, which unnecessarily splits the Shire into two. It is however inevitable that Mitchell Shire Council needs to be split between this Division and the Division of McEwen. To compensate for Strathbogie Shire Council remaining in this Division, we propose that the southern boundary of the Division be drawn to the south of Seymour, but to the north of Broadford, which would remain in McEwen.

In respect of the name of the Division, we do not see the necessity of renaming the Division and propose that the Division remains known as Murray.

Whilst recognising that the guidelines for renaming divisions suggest generally avoiding locality or place names, we submit that when existing divisions are substantially unchanged through a redistribution process, they should retain their existing names and we do not consider the substantial cost of renaming the Division to be in the public interest.

We believe it is important to take into consideration the significance of the Murray River to the region and its people. The Murray is Australia's longest river and the economy of the current Division of Murray, as part of Australia's food bowl, relies heavily on irrigated water from the river system. Given the region's reliance on the river and the affinity of the community to the existing name, we contend that the Division as currently named is appropriate.

#### **Proposed Division of Cox (existing Division of Corangamite)**

There has significant community concern regarding the proposed changes to the boundaries of the Division currently known as Corangamite.

We propose leaving the existing boundary between Corio and Corangamite in Geelong as the Barwon River, and leaving the Bellarine Peninsula as part of Corio. We also propose retaining the entirety of Colac Otway Shire in Corangamite.

These changes can be offset, with minimal consequential changes, by transferring Golden Plains Shire to the Divisions of either Wannon or Ballarat.

As a Federation Division, The Nationals support retaining the existing name of the Division. Corangamite is one of the few remaining divisions that was used in the first federal election and is Aboriginal in origin. Furthermore, the proposed new name has generated unfortunate commentary in the media that has distracted from the Committee's broader efforts.

As a party with MPs and candidates exclusively focused on regional Victoria, we remain at the Committee's disposal to provide further information to assist in your deliberations. I would be pleased to present to the Committee and speak to The Nationals objections and any other issues.

Your sincerely

**Matthew Harris**  
**State Director**

04/05/2017