



Objection 371

Australian Forest Products Association

3 pages

4 May 2018

Redistribution Secretariat for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 768
Melbourne VIC 3001
FedRedistribution-VIC@aec.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Draft boundaries of the electorate division of Corangamite

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Victorian federal redistribution for the Federal electorate of Corangamite.

AFPA is the peak national body for Australia's forest, wood and paper products industry, with members across the state of Victoria including in the electorates of Corangamite, Wannon and Corio. AFPA represent the industry's interests to governments, the general public and other stakeholders on the sustainable development and use of Australia's forest, wood and paper products.

AFPA makes this submission in support of our member AKD Softwoods, a large and diverse plantation and timber product processing company with its central office and main sawmilling operations in Colac.

AFPA also represents other significant forestry companies with a strong presence in the Corangamite electorate including the Colac-Otway region. In particular, Geelong-based woodchip and plantation company Midway, which owns almost 7000 hectares of plantation forest in the electorate of Corangamite, and HVP Plantations, which owns almost 6000 hectares of plantation forest in Corangamite.

About AKD Softwoods

AKD is one of the biggest employers in the Colac-Otway Shire, directly employing 300 workers in the Colac area (600 across its national operations), and indirectly employing hundreds more in the region. AKD is proud of its 60-year history in the Colac-Otway region, and remains headquartered at the site on which it was founded in 1955 by a cooperative of local families.

AKD's vertically integrated operations comprise two sawmills in Colac processing a combined 750,000m³ of sawlog annually; 8500 hectares of land, with 7000 hectares of it as productive tree crop; three post and pole preservation businesses; a joint venture woodchip export

facility in Geelong; along with a remanufacturing business, in-house engineering and trucking divisions.

Through its joint venture with HVP Plantations, Softwood Plantation Exporters (SPE), AKD exports woodchips to pulp and paper customers based in Asia, primarily Japan and China. With the evolution of bio-mass energy generation gathering momentum, there is increasing demand for AKD to also supply woody residues to international markets for heating and power generation.

AKD also exports pulp and industrial logs from its plantation portfolio to China and Korea through the three major shipping ports in Victoria (Portland, Geelong and Melbourne) for the purposes of construction, packaging, pulping and other end applications.

AKD Softwood's ties to Corangamite

AFPA strongly supports the view of AKD, the Colac-Otway Shire and other Colac businesses in opposing the proposed relocation of the Colac-Otway Shire from the electorate of Corangamite to the electorate of Wannon. Colac's distance to the major centre of Geelong (in Corangamite) is a 45-minute drive, while the centre of the Wannon electorate, Hamilton, is two hours away.

For AKD, and indeed many businesses and communities in the Colac-Otway Shire, their economic and social interest are inextricably linked with greater Geelong and the Surf Coast, which would be diminished if Colac-Otway Shire is moved into Wannon. The direct transport links forged by the Princes Highway between Colac and Geelong and V/Line train services are integral to the key economic and social connections between the population centres of Colac and Geelong. For AKD, these are key transport corridors with around 360 daily truck movements, including 80 daily truck movements of outbound finished product of which 98 per cent are east-bound. In short, AKD's Colac operations have very tangible business links throughout the federal electorate of Corangamite.

Furthermore, like other Colac employers, AKD employs many workers who live in the greater Geelong region. Conversely, as other submissions have noted, many residents of the Colac-Otway Shire travel to Geelong for work. This connection has been further underpinned by the duplication of the Princes Highway, and the introduction of extra rail services between Colac and Geelong.

AKD also has many of its own plantations located north of Geelong and in the Otways relying on connecting roads and infrastructure to transport the wood resource to Colac and Geelong.

Colac Otway Shire's connections to greater Geelong

Colac Otway Shire is an active member of the G21 regional alliance, a collection of five councils (City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast, Borough of Queenscliff, Golden Plains and Colac Otway) that work collaboratively to advocate for regional issues in a very meaningful and powerful way with state and federal governments. The G21 regional partnership includes all

the area in the Corangamite electorate. If Colac Otway is removed from the Corangamite electorate, it would significantly weaken these regional partnerships.

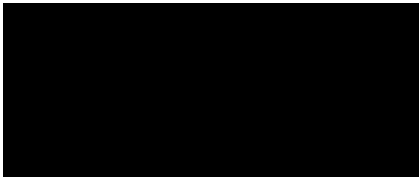
No new evidence to support Colac Otway Shire’s removal from Corangamite

AFPA notes that a similar proposal for the transfer of the Colac Otway Shire into Wannon was considered at the time of the last Victorian Federal redistribution in 2010. At the time, the Redistribution Committee correctly rejected this proposal following a strong case by the Colac Otway Shire community demonstrating its strong ties to the broader Corangamite electorate. As there has been no change in the communities of interest in the division of Corangamite to warrant removing either part or the entirety of the Colac Otway Shire from the division, it is appropriate and consistent that the committee should again reject this proposal.

General comments

Should you have any questions regarding these matters, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Victor Violante, Senior Policy Manager, on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,



Ross Hampton

Chief Executive Officer

Australian Forest Products Association