



# Objection 374

WH Bennet and Sons Pty Ltd

3 pages

# Objection to the proposed redistribution of the Federal electorate of Corangamite.

As described in the

*'Proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral  
divisions APRIL 2018'*

Report of the Redistribution Committee for  
Victoria.

**May 2018**

As owners of a major business located in Colac and having operated other businesses in the Colac and Geelong region over several decades we are opposed to the proposed redistribution of the Corangamite electorate that would see Colac isolated from the existing electorate.

We believe that there are a number of key areas of concern.

### **1. Economic, social and regional interests**

Colac businesses have significant links with customers and suppliers located to their east. Geelong and Melbourne are the major markets for business. They have established long-term relationships and share common interests and concerns. These include transport infrastructure, education and training and trade/manufacturing policies. Currently such concerns can be brought to the attention of one member of parliament.

The social links with east of the electorate are also very strong. Progression through the ranks of various sports tends to be to the east. Colac residents also have strong links with the recreational facilities of Geelong, the surf coast and the Otways.

Having the majority of these social activities contained within the boundaries of one electorate and represented by one member of parliament is seen as an advantage in having a consistent message for the region.

### **2. Communication and Travel**

The majority of product leaving our Colac facilities travels via road east through the current Corangamite electorate to market. The condition of major highways and transport policy has a significant impact on our local business.

The condition of Princes Highway between Geelong and Colac has been of concern for decades. We doubt that the duplication of the highway would have been approved if it was split between two electorates.

Our current member has an office in Colac and at worst has an office an hour away in Geelong. Under the proposed boundary redistribution our local member would have their office in Hamilton which is over two hours away. This would drastically limit access and therefore impact communication with our local member. Also the size of the Wannon electorate would limit the members ability to visit all areas on a timely basis.

### **3. Physical features and geography**

The current Wannon and Corangamite electorates are significantly different in nature. Wannon is a vast electorate covering approximately 36,000 square kilometres with a primary focus on broad acre farming.

Corangamite, whilst having a large farming community has a large industrial sector based around Geelong and Colac, and significant tourism and service industry from Geelong all along its southern coast line and the Otways. Colac is a key hub and is closely aligned to these industries, far more so than the primary industry in Wannon.

The area north of the Hamilton Highway more in keeping with the Wannon electorate and would therefore be a better fit to be removed from the Corangamite electorate than Colac.

The Otway ranges and surf coast are an intrinsic part of the local community and the current electorate. As stated previously they provide our community with significant recreational and cultural opportunities that are held in high regard and are highly valued.

Separating these features from Colac would see a significantly reduced focus if any on this area from the local Wannon member. This could have a negative impact on the community relationship to the region.

#### **4. Existing boundaries in the state**

The Colac Otway Shire is currently contained within the Corangamite electorate. Under the proposed redistribution the shire would be split between the expanded Wannon electorate and the proposed Cox electorate.

Regardless of which party may hold the seats it would require the shire dealing with two members. As it is likely that from time to time electorates could be held by different parties there are likely to be different policies or priorities that could impact the shire. This could lead to prolonged deliberations before decisions are made. Such delays could seriously impact the operations of our business.

#### **Submission**

Based on the information presented in the key criteria above we wish to submit that:

1. Colac should not be isolated from Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Otways.
2. Colac businesses have strong links with markets to their east, especially Geelong and Melbourne.
3. It is efficient for business to be able to gain access and talk to their local member about a full range of issues that affect their operations including transport, employment and trade that are all within the one electorate. Hence Colac should not be incorporated into Wannon.
4. The local Colac community has strong social and cultural links to the area to the east including Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Otways.
5. It would be more efficient for the Colac Otway Shire to be contained within one electorate.

We trust that you will give this submission due consideration.

WH Bennet & Sons Pty Ltd