



Objection 390

South Colac Football and Netball Club

2 pages

Australian Electoral Commission
Redistribution Committee

Re: South Colac Football and Netball objection to the proposed redistribution of the Federal electorate of Corangamite.

South Colac is a Football and Netball club located in Elliminyt, we field 4 footballs teams (2 junior and 2 senior) and 6 Netball teams (3 junior and 3 senior) on a Saturday, competing in the CDFNL (Colac and District Football and Netball League). Our facility is the Elliminyt Reserve located in Elliminyt (South Colac)

We have real concern with the proposed redistribution of current federal electorate Corangamite.

1. Links to the east

Our “community of interest” or our connection is to our East, not to our West, with relationships and connections to Birregurra, Apollo Bay, Geelong. Our competition covers our immediate vicinity i.e. Alvie, Eagles at Irrewillipie, Simpson, Colac Imperials, Irrewarra, Apollo Bay, Lorne, Birregurra, Irrewarra.

The proposed redistribution would rip our competition in half, with half the clubs in one electorate and the other half in another. We ask is this truly needed. For example, Birregurra, Apollo Bay, and Lorne would all be part of the new electorate Cox, as such this could entice them to move from the CDFNL league and be part of the league to the East. This would destroy our League reducing it to 6 clubs.

We have strong links with affiliated organisations to our east. Geelong hosts a number of regional head offices for sporting and community organisations. AFL Barwon our local governing body is based in Geelong, the proposed boundary realignment would see result in organisations and teams in local leagues being split between two electorates. This could impact funding and support for such bodies. It is hard enough for a community organisation to make submissions to one person let alone having to do it twice.

Football has “pathway “processes, where talented players move up through representative grades. For example, the town has an elite club “Colac Tigers” for Seniors they compete in the GFL competition, elite players from this competition can be chosen for the Geelong VFL side. The Geelong Falcons is the AFL draft 9TAC cup) pathway process for Juniors. This is all further proof of our connection to the East and not to the West.

As an association we have regular contact with clubs to our East and many players live in locations to our East i.e. Geelong, Winchelsea, Melbourne, Torquay, Bellarine etc, not to the west, this just reinforces our connection to the east.

2. Access to our local member

Ease of communication with the local member of parliament is very important. 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 to our local member. We would, in most cases, have to discuss issues with two representatives which would mean additional time and resources and invariably lead to time delays in decision making.

Community facilities are an integral part of maintaining and growing regional communities, as such if we were to become part of Wannon and electorate, there is a logical logistics issues where the Member will simply be unable to be effective over such a massive geographic spread.

We would be unlikely to be able to see and seek our Member for support to ensure the development of community assets to support a growing regional location such as Colac.

3. Colac Otway Shire

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. The community has strong links with Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Otways, hence its name. These links should not be broken.

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 business and community organisation.

4. Colac is a successful and growing regional Community

Colac is a success story in regional Australia, with strong employment and growth prospects. This is based around many factors, such as our strong employment, strong community spirit and location relative to a large city.

As a growing regional location, we believe that the AEC should not be doing anything to jeopardise this story. Our connection to the East is one of the foundations of Colac's success. There is no gain for Colac to become part of Wannon and we only face risk and uncertainty.

At the heart of the success of Colac is our strong Community allegiance and at the heart of this is the sports clubs and facilities. As a community and as a town, we recognise our success is also based on our foundation and stability as an original federal seat that dates back to 1905, and our connection to the East. We fundamentally question why the success of Colac should be put in doubt for a population redistribution that ignores the long term cultural and heritage connections we have, and the massive geographic spread that would occur under Wannon.

5. The name "Cox"

We strongly object to this name, it has no relevance to our area. The Corangamite name as both an indigenous word and the title of our seat since Federation, and the name of one of our largest natural features, needs to remain. The slang connotations of "Cox" should also rule this name out. As an association we recognise the "traditional owners of the land", and we believe not enough is done in regional Victoria to support our indigenous communities. Removing the same Corangamite, is further erosion.

In summary we believe that Colac should not be isolated from its close ties to its east with communities in and around Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Otways. Timely access to our local member is important and is highly valued.

We trust that you will give these concerns due consideration.