



Comment on objections 90

Libby Mears

2 pages

Redistribution Secretariat for Victoria
Australian
N Electoral Commission
GPO Box 768
Melbourne VIC 3001

May 18, 2018

Dear Secretariat,

Comment on Electoral Boundary Submissions for the proposed Seat of Cox

I write to respectfully provide commentary in relation to the responses to the AEC's proposed electoral boundaries relating to the proposed Seat of Cox.

I respectfully disagree with the proposed name for the Seat of Cox

I would like to suggest that the new electorate be named after one of the many significant aboriginal environmental features that can be found across the proposed new electorate.

I strongly support the proposal to bring together like minded coastal communities into the one electorate.

There is a strong community of interest and shared values among the residents who live in coastal communities along the coast. The challenges of balancing the impacts of tourism and population growth in sensitive and unique coastal environments is one which would benefit from a collective voice.

The importance of investment in coastal infrastructure and the management of the coast in an integrated and holistic way is critically important. Coastal communities also have increasing concerns re climate change and the impact on the settlements and coastal environments.

Bringing this region together will enable a more efficient and effective response to these significant concerns which have recently been highlighted by the Great Ocean Road Taskforce. Planning and investment in key arterial road and rail links connecting communities of Armstrong Creek, Torquay and Bellarine to Geelong and Melbourne for commuting and access to services, education and social connectivity are also critical

I understand and agree with the removal of Colac from the proposed new seat.

While residents of Colac Otway Shire indicate a strong sense of community interest with Geelong, this does not preclude also having a very strong affinity with Wannon, and the Great South Coast. This affinity is born of proximity, like-minded businesses and access to local services and tourism on the coast.

When considering the long term future and the demographics, it is logical for Colac to move into Wannon. There is a natural fit with Wannon and the shared focus on agribusiness to drive the economy, its links with the Great South Coast Alliance, along with many shared social and infrastructure issues, year 12 retention, youth unemployment, and the need for greater public transport. Reliance on tourism trade generated by the 12 Apostles and the Great Ocean Road are strong connectors with Wannon, along with unifying factors of freight, rail and arterial road links.

The G21 alliance of five Councils - Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire, the Borough of Queenscliff, City of Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast Shire, has worked very well for many years, however due to the significant increases in population growth there may be a need to consider the future alignment. The realignment may offer new considerations for how this region collaborates into the future.

Support for changes to the Corangamite boundaries

The Corangamite electorate's population at the 2016 poll was already over the threshold mark, with 10,000 more voters than Wannon. Strong growth around Armstrong Creek, Torquay, Bannockburn and Ocean Grove, coupled with static or declining populations in centers in the neighbouring seat of Wannon, have contributed to the trend and suggest an influential redistribution.

In the face of such fluctuations, Colac and the Colac Otway Shire's hinterland should be removed from the Corangamite electorate and incorporated into the Wannon electorate while the whole of Bellarine should be incorporated into the new seat of Cox. It also makes sense for the whole of the Golden Plains Shire to be included into the Seat of Cox while the suburbs of Belmont and Highton be included in the Seat of Corio.

In contrast, the remainder of Corangamite is less rural, more coastal, more urban with many significant pockets of rapid population growth, supported increasingly by greater access to Geelong's services, education and health.

There is also a dynamic workforce that commutes to Geelong or Melbourne for work. However, there is a growing number of startup and home-based businesses that create local employment. Tourism and construction in the new seat of Cox electorate also provides a significant boost to the local economy.

In conclusion, it makes sense to remove Colac and the Colac Otway Shire hinterland from the Seat of Cox and incorporate it into Wannon while keeping the entirety of Golden Plains Shire and the Bellarine into the new seat of Cox. Then, Belmont and Highton, which have great synergy with Geelong, become part of the Seat of Corio.

Libby Mears
18 May 2018