THE FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION VICTORIA

Objection 64

Edmund Carew

4 pages

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[redacted]

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Mr Tom Rogers
Chair
Redistribution Committee for Victoria
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 768
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Rogers

I wish to object to aspects of the proposed redistribution of Federal electorate boundaries in Victoria including boundaries and electorate names.

As a general comment, I agree with observations made by Tim Colebatch in a recent submission to you that the Australian Electoral Commission in naming electorates ought be reflecting geographical names rather than the names of former deceased Prime Ministers or other members of the community.

This would also avoid interminable arguments about whether to name electorates after a man or a woman, which Prime Minister's name is placed where and so on.

I turn to individual Divisions.

DIVISION OF COX: NAME AND BOUNDARY

The Committee acknowledged in a media release that it was 'loath' to change the name from the existing Corangamite.

The obvious question, then, is 'why' did you do so?

This has been the name of the electoral division since Federation.

Having worked in the area, the name of Corangamite is well known. The eponymous lake's alleged declining connection with the electorate has been no bar to continuing with this pleasant sounding Aboriginal name that is quintessentially Australian. It also gives a connection with water, arguably the key focus of the electorate and environs whether along the Great Ocean Road or in Western Victoria with its numerous volcanic lakes.

Having worked in the Corangamite electorate in past years I did not ever hear any disquiet about the name. In contrast, there was some pride at it having retained the same name since 1901.

In contrast, in choosing 'Cox', there is the unsavoury whiff of political correctness. Media comment that has occurred since the Committee released its report, including from the current Federal Member, suggests that the proposed name also makes a mockery of female candidates. This is unacceptable.

'Cox' may be the poorest proposed name ever advanced for any electoral division in Australia. I suggest that 'Corangamite' be retained as the Division's name, notwithstanding that the eponymous Shire or lake is not in the electorate under your redistributive proposals.

The suggested boundaries of Cox/ Corangamite should be altered.

Colac enjoys far stronger links with Geelong than it does Warrnambool or Hamilton. In recent years after complaints from tertiary and TAFE students, government owned rail operator V/Line initiated a weekday return road coach to Geelong at times other than what the then three return trains offered. This has not been matched by an equivalent service from Colac towards Warrnambool as there is little discernible demand.

Apollo Bay and Lorne also have significant links with Colac as the latter is the nearest major centre.

Retaining what in 2019 is estimated to be 11304 Clifton Springs and 1234 Newcomb/Moolap voters in the Division of Corio could be almost balanced by retaining 9082 Colac and 2959 Colac region electors in Cox/ Corangamite.

This has the additional advantage of placing the electorate closer to Lake Corangamite. Use of the latter as a partial boundary with Wannon may be appropriate and would cement retention of the name.

This will mean that the low population growth electorate of Wannon is under quota. The neighbouring Mallee electorate has a forecast net small loss in population. Both would require further adjustment.

The Committee may be reluctant to encroach further with essentially rural, low or no growth divisions adjacent to or into defined urban areas of growing provincial cities.

One precedent is with Cox/Corangamite that for many years has contained some Geelong suburbs such as Highton - proposed to be expunged - and the rural (including oceanside) 'hinterland.'

DIVISION OF CORIO: BOUNDARY

As noted under Cox/Corangamite, Clifton Springs and Moolap/Newcomb electors ought be retained in this Division. Consequential other required changes are matters for the Committee.

DIVISION OF HIGGINS: BOUNDARY

In respect to the Division of Higgins, the proposed transfer of slightly more than 5000 electors who reside in the City of Stonnington, Windsor 3181 postcode means these individuals will be voting in the proposed electorate of Macnamara that is centred on the City of Port Phillip.

The existing boundary is sensible and ought be retained. Windsor is a postcode covering electors residing in two municipalities, so retention would maximise communities of interest in relation to economic and social factors. The third consideration - 'regional' - is irrelevant to metropolitan areas with relatively high population density.

Those in Windsor 3181 who shop or obtain services locally tend to direct custom to Chapel Street, Windsor/Prahran/South Yarra and Prahran Market, the latter being across the border in South Yarra 3141. Major arterial Punt Road is a significant boundary for the inner suburbs.

Retention of these 5,000 voters in Higgins would mean, in isolation, that it was above quota.

In turn this would affect Hotham that in the Committee's proposed redrawing is already affecting more than 115,000 electors as either 'gains' or 'losses.' an extremely high number. Given multiple other electorates involved, I will leave it to the Committee to undertake further rebalancing if it so determines in the Hughesdale/ Murrumbeena areas. One option would be to omit Hughesdale from the Higgins electorate.

DIVISION OF HOTHAM: BOUNDARY

Please refer to my comments under Higgins.

DIVISION OF MACNAMARA: NAME AND BOUNDARY

The renaming of Melbourne Ports converts an easily comprehensible name to one that is difficult to spell and that does not honour a well known former public figure.

The existing name ought be retained as 'Melbourne Ports' implies a connection with the sea.

The electorate's number of voters in 2019 will be within quota. Transferring voters from the City of Stonnington part of the Windsor 3181 postcode is unnecessary at this point in time.

If the Committee desired to include new voters, it could include the Docklands and physical Melbourne Ports areas.

DIVISION OF MALLEE: BOUNDARY

Please refer to my comments under Cox/Corangamite.

DIVISION OF MONASH: NAME

Sir John Monash was undoubtedly a great Australian, but he has been honoured in many ways. As the Committee previously twice determined, there is no pressing reason to alter the existing McMillan name, but if the Committee is insistent, it is preferable to adopt a geographical name.

The decision to rename similarly smacks of political correctness. As the eminent Geoffrey Blainey observed "indigenous grievances and disadvantages still permeate the media", obscuring the many achievements of Aboriginal Australians since white settlement.

Pastoralists did a good job in opening up the country.

If the Committee insists that it be renamed, a geographical name is preferable.

DIVISION OF NICHOLLS: NAME

Again, while the individuals after which this electorate is proposed to be renamed were distinguished, there is no pressing need to alter this Divisional name.

It remains appropriate that a great river such as the Murray ought have an electorate named after it, notwithstanding that the river is associated with three states.

DIVISION OF WANNON: NAME

Please refer to my comments under Cox/Corangamite.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely

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Edmund Carew