



Comment on suggestion 48

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2 pages

Comment on suggestions for the 2020-21 Victorian redistribution

I wish to comment on some of the suggestions put forward for the ongoing redistribution of federal electoral divisions in Victoria, first concerning division names and then divisional boundaries. I have no affiliation with any political party or organisation.

Division names

I note that many submissions have called for the naming of the new division after a woman, in order to move towards gender equality in the names of our electorates. I particularly support the naming of a division after Aboriginal activist and leader Margaret Tucker, as highlighted in a number of submissions. However, I note that it is convention that former Prime Ministers are typically considered first for new division names, and as such, following the passing of Bob Hawke, priority should be given to naming a division after him, as an influential and iconic former PM. Nonetheless, I feel that it would be remiss for the Committee not to consider naming a division after a prominent female leader, and so I suggest that the division of Wills instead be renamed Hawke. Hawke represented the division of Wills for over a decade and thus has a particularly strong connection to the local area, making it suitable for the division to be renamed in his honour. Further, Wills was after William Wills, companion of Robert Burke in the eponymous Burke and Wills Expedition. However, while for most of its history Wills has had a companion division named Burke, there has now been no division named Burke for sixteen years. By retiring Wills and renaming the division as Hawke, we are able to honour an influential former prime minister, while also allowing for the new division created to be named Tucker after an influential Aboriginal woman, improving diversity while maintaining custom.

Division boundaries

As a resident of south-eastern Melbourne, I will keep my comments on divisional boundaries confined to the area I know best. Over the last decade, I have lived in Higgins, Chisholm and Goldstein, and am deeply connected with these and other neighbouring electorates. I believe that those divisions south of the Yarra could be further refined in order to make them more coherent divisions aligned with communities of interest, and focussed on key local centres. I wish to express my support for those suggestions which propose the reorganisation of both Higgins and Macnamara to share a mostly vertical eastern or western boundary, creating two more regularly-shaped divisions less conflicted as to their identity. Macnamara loses the more suburban areas surrounding Caulfield while Macnamara gains the more inner-city areas of South Yarra and Prahran, aligning both divisions with their dominant character. Further, I wish to express my support for the realignment of the division of Goldstein. Proposed in similar forms in suggestions from Justin Lamond and the Australian Liberal Party, the shifting of this division to incorporate Bentleigh East ends the division of Bentleigh and its eastern neighbour, and allows for a more coherent boundary with Isaacs and Hotham in a primarily industrial area which already serves as a divider, as opposed to the current boundary through residential streets. In exchange, the coastal suburbs of Beaumaris and Black Rock would be transferred to join similar suburbs, like Mentone and Mordialloc, in Isaacs, in turn allowing Hotham to become a division centred on Clayton and Springvale, Bruce to become a

Dandenong- and Narre Warren-focussed division, and Chisholm to become a Mount Waverley- and Glen Waverley-centred division, each better reflecting their communities and character. Shifting Menzies further south and Deakin further west in turn accounts for the remaining electors, and permits divisions better aligned to transport, community and employment markers. In this regard I particularly commend Darren McSweeney's suggestions for the latter three divisions.

The new division, likely to be located in the northwest, should similarly attempt to allow further alignment of divisional boundaries with community centres, and should ideally be centred on one or all of Sunbury, Sydenham and Melton.

I thank the Committee for considering my suggestions.