



Objection 4

Martin Gordon

3 pages

[REDACTED]

The Augmented Electoral Commission for Victoria

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to lodge an objection against the proposed redistribution for the State of Victoria.

I would firstly note that I found the overwhelming number of changes, or changes not made were quite reasonable.

Issues

Tucker and renaming

I note that the Commissioners propose to retire the name Corangamite, which as they note is a federation Division, an aboriginal name and a locality name.

The choice of the replacement name Tucker is quite an appropriate name and which honours both a woman and an aboriginal woman. I note that in the previous redistribution that contemporaries of Margaret Tucker were honoured with the naming of Divisions, namely Cooper and Nicholls. Names I noted were quite reasonable and appropriate at the time, in honour of two aboriginal men.

The commissioners will note that I have sought to seek the renaming of Mallee as Wimmera (on several occasions), which would restore an aboriginal word, and a Federation name. Given that the commissioners note that Corangamite refers to bitter water, which might equally be a lake or the sea. I would most strongly urge the retention of Corangamite, as it is probably one of the better known Divisions in Australia, certainly a Federation name, an aboriginal name and associated with the area adjacent to Geelong, Corio Bay the Bellarine Peninsula and the Surf Coast. It should remain so.

The fact that Margaret Tucker is a Yorta Yorta woman, opens up a particularly creative opportunity which is that the Yorta Yorta people are from a region on the Murray River which includes part of the existing and proposed Mallee Division. I would suggest that it would be more appropriate to retire the name Mallee and replace it with Tucker. This would retain Corangamite as a federation name; an aboriginal name; allow for the adoption of an aboriginal name Tucker (in place of Mallee); and further honour an aboriginal woman; so, increasing the number of women honoured and the number of aboriginal people honoured.

I would add that if the Commissioners are of such a disposition to so readily retire federation and aboriginal names, I assume that in a coming redistribution in New South Wales the commissioners might as well retire Werriwa, which has not included the feature it is named after (Lake George) since before World War 1. Given the number of potential renaming's for Prime Ministers (certainly in New South Wales) such renaming's will become more urgent.

I would add that joint names are not that common, but I was surprised to read in the commissioners proposals that the Division of Cook is not jointly named in honour of Prime Minister Joseph Cook, which is a surprising oversight. The commissioners should note this and remedy this in due course.

I would add that I am not averse to retiring names, in order to make way for honouring people. I alone proposed the retirement of Throsby to be renamed Whitlam several years back in New South Wales. The commissioners then took this up. I have supported the renaming of Batman as Cooper, Murray as Nicholls, Denison as Clark, McMillan as Monash. There are also many others.

The redistribution committees seem to be reluctant to rename Divisions, or when they do, they seem to pick the wrong ones at times. As a result, there are many names which honour obscure colonial era officials, many of not particular note. Many worthy women are ignored, many worthy aboriginal names and people are ignored, the time taken to honour some Prime Ministers (e.g. Joseph Cook and William McMahon) is far too long. Gellibrand, for one could be retired.

Many scientists are ignored, and 'firsts' are sometimes ignored even by their own party, for example Mary Holman in Western Australia, who is the first Labor Party MP in Australia and yet the Western Australian branch of the Labor Party never seeks to honour her. Given the shortage of women's names in Division names and in Western Australia and Victoria in particular this should be remedied. The worst thing that might follow is some missive from a member of the public, but as a former public servant I understand that taking 'risks' is seen as courageous, but I am sure the weight of history will be on your side. After all it is only a name!

In summary, I would urge the commissioners to retire the name Mallee in favour of Tucker and retain Corangamite.

Other Changes

Unchanged Divisions

I agree with the lack of changes to the Division of Gippsland, Indi, Nicholls, Goldstein, Scullin, Aston.

Minor changes

I agree with the modest changes made to Kooyong, Isaacs, Melbourne, Monash, Mallee (Tucker), Casey, Bendigo, Wills, Holt.

Larger changes

I am in broad agreement with the changes (due to their interlocking nature) to La Trobe, Jaga Jaga, Monash, Ballarat, Lalor, Gellibrand (noting resolving the awkward split of Point Cook is most welcome), Gorton, Calwell (noting that the retention of Craigieburn in Calwell is significant point of agreement), Wannon, Maribyrnong and Fraser (noting the more satisfactory use of the Maribyrnong River as a boundary), Jaga Jaga, Menzies, Deakin, Chisholm, Higgins and Macnamara (noting the weight of submissions and also the 'biting the bullet' aspect like with abolishing Kalgoorlie to create Durack in Western Australia), and Bruce.

Isaacs and Hotham

Sometimes when making boundaries, numerical constraints can be significant and factors such as community of interest, might become secondary. I note that in a previous redistribution I proposed a more east-west orientation for Hotham (which the previous redistribution adopted), and this is becoming more pronounced with population movement. I understand the commissioners easterly displacement of Hotham into Bruce and Dandenong, but on looking at the map and noting current and proposed Victorian boundary submissions it would seem the inclusion of Bentleigh East (in the Glen Eira Council) and Hughesdale (from the same Council might fit better into Isaacs on community of interest grounds) and make greater use of Freeway and the Kingston Council and Greater Dandenong Council boundary. This would mean a Division based largely on the Frankston Railway line (Isaacs) and a more inland one (Hotham) and the inclusion of Greater Dandenong in two Divisions (Hotham and Bruce) rather than three Divisions (Hotham, Bruce and Isaacs).

I would urge the commissioners into a reassessment of their proposals.

Corio and Tucker (Corangamite)

In the previous redistribution I had argued for the retention of the South Barwon River as the principal division between Corio and Corangamite. I had also proposed a transfer of entire Council areas to accommodate changes (for example Golden Plains out and Colac Otway into Corangamite). I had argued for the retention of the Corio Bay focus of Corio and an ocean focus of Corangamite. My more recent comments in this redistribution round reflect this line of reasoning too.

Since 2018 the addition of a new Division, together with strong local population growth the contraction of the two Divisions into the urban area of Geelong continues. The population growth is most pronounced in Corangamite. I still believe the use of the South Barwon River as a boundary to be a better solution for the division of Geelong and it would undo this 'C' shape that Corangamite is assuming.

I note that the psephologist Antony Green describe that one reason that led to the creation of the Division of Durack and the division of Western Australia into northern and southern regional Divisions was the increasing 'dumb bell shape' that the Division of O'Connor was assuming. I would draw attention to the fact that Corangamite (Tucker) is assuming something like a 'dumb bell' or 'C' shape. This will become more pronounced with future redistributions if the South Barwon River is not used as a boundary.

I would urge the commissioners into a reassessment of their proposals.

Conclusion

I wish the commissioners well in their further deliberations.

Martin Gordon

22 March 2021