



Objection 38

Adass Israel Community

2 pages

CONGREGATION
ADASS ISRAEL

ק"ק עדת ישראל
מעלבארן יצ"ו

בס"ד

Victorian Redistribution Secretariat

Australian Electoral Commission

Dear Secretariat Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit an objection to the proposed redistribution of Victorian electorates. My submission is in respect of your proposals regarding Macnamara and Higgins.

I understand that one of the main criteria on which electoral boundaries are based is to unite communities of interest – I represent one such community.

My name is Benjamin Koppel. I am President of the Adass Israel community. We are an orthodox Jewish community based in Ripponlea, Balaclava, Elsternwick and St Kilda East.

I am very concerned by the proposal to move St Kilda East, Elsternwick and Caulfield from Macnamara into Higgins, and split these suburbs down Hotham St. My concerns are shared by many leading organisations in the Jewish communities of Macnamara and their leadership, as well as other prominent members of the Jewish community.

Adass Israel is one particularly vibrant and active part of Melbourne's Jewish community. Our congregation dates back to around 1940, and is highly interconnected and active. We have a number of institutions that are designed to service the needs of our community and permit our members to retain their commitment to our traditions. We have for example our own synagogue located on Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea; our school campus located in King Street, Elsternwick; and our kosher butcher located on Inkerman Street, St Kilda.

Our Adass Israel community institutions, and our families, are located on both sides of the proposed Hotham St divide. Prior to this proposed redistribution, the entirety of our community has been located within a singular electorate – that of Macnamara. Indeed, our Adass community has been entirely encompassed within Macnamara (and as it was previously known, Melbourne Ports) for several decades. However, these proposed boundaries would divide our community between two electorates – Higgins and Macnamara.

And we are but one part of the Jewish community of Melbourne, which is a community of interest that spans across Balaclava, Elsternwick, Ripponlea, St Kilda East, Elwood and all across Caulfield. Nearly all of the community's infrastructure and the places of significance in Jewish life are found in these areas – our aged care facilities, our kosher outlets, our synagogues and schools.

Our Jewish community (and the Adass community) has a number of interests regarding which it is essential that we can influence our representative in parliament, particularly with respect to issues of racial discrimination, education and community security.

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Our Adass community (and the Jewish community more generally) is not a large community. It is a small and extremely tight-knit community and the majority of our community members have limited interaction with the broader, secular world. It is thus vital to our community leaders that we are able to easily make representations on behalf of our community members, our families and our institutions. Being represented within a single electorate and by a single Member of Parliament makes this possible.

The Jewish community is solely located in these areas. It has no meaningful nor organised presence in any Division in Victoria other than Macnamara, unlike many other communities of interest surrounding ethnic, cultural or religious interests. We have been continuously represented within the boundaries of Macnamara (and its predecessor Melbourne Ports) for many decades.

The AEC's proposal will divide the Jewish community across Higgins and Macnamara. Our community will no longer have any meaningful capacity to influence a representative on these issues that deeply affect us. It will reduce our voice and our influence over affairs that concern us.

The representation we have enjoyed in Macnamara has been essential to our community's development and in our view has enabled positive contributions to the Australian political system and the state of government policy – for example I note the contribution of the community to advocating for and protecting the laws that safeguard multicultural communities against racial discrimination, and our success in advocating for greater funding and support for the security needs of religious and racial minority communities such as ours.

This is why in our view it is critically important that our Adass community and the broader Jewish community remain together in one Division, so that we can be represented by a Member who can and will take carriage of our interests.

On behalf of the Adass Israel community and the broader Jewish communities in Macnamara, I respectfully request that you reconsider the proposed boundary with a view to ensuring that the areas containing the Jewish community remain in the electorate of Macnamara.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon your proposals.

Yours sincerely



Benjamin Koppel

President